COMING OUT;

AND

THE FIELD OF

THE FORTY FOOTSTEPS.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

577

577

BY

JANE AND ANNA MARIA PORTER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1828.

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

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PREFATORY ADDRESS

TO

THE READER OF "COMING OUT."

THE reception given by an indulgent public to my novel of "*Honor O'Hara*" has encouraged me to make another effort in the same style.

I am aware that works professedly written to display existing manners are now generally taken up with the expectation of finding living characters, masked under feigned names: it might be politic in a writer, therefore, to take advantage of this growing taste for personality. But disliking both the principle and the practice of such unfair painting, I beg leave

to disclaim either the merit or the odium of having drawn one intentional portrait throughout the following pages: yet do I freely acknowledge having availed myself of some well-known incidents in the life of an interesting individual, to swell the events, and enforce the lesson of my story.

Appearing as I now do, for a second time, in a joint work with my sister, and once more taking that precedence of her to which I am in no way entitled, I trust the candid reader will believe me incapable of such assumption upon any other ground than that of a mutual persuasion, that the effect of our very different stories would be heightened by giving the tale of the lightest character first.

ANNA MARIA PORTER.

ESHER,
November, 1827.

PREFACE

TO

" THE FIELD OF THE FORTY FOOTSTEPS."

WITH regard to the little romance called " The Field of the Forty Footsteps," which occupies the third volume of this work, its Author makes no fictitious pretension in ascribing the origin of its name to a tradition which forms the *nucleus* of her tale. That tradition was actually told to her, and in the manner she describes in the opening of the story itself. For the completion of it into a body and aspect, corresponding with the circumstances and the times of the alleged fact, she has to acknowledge ob-

ligations to several friendly services;—and, amongst others, to Mr. Waring, of the Toxophilite House in Caroline-street, Bedford-square, for his kind assistance in tracing the site of the Field of the Forty Footsteps.—To Thomas Roberts, Esq., author of "The English Bowman," she is similarly indebted, as well as for other matters connected with the tale:—and also to a venerable Antiquarian, east of Temple-Bar, for much that relates to the old city usages.—But for the most interesting, and even awful document, described in the middle of her narrative, she is obliged to a noble descendant of the illustrious subject of that document; and thus she expresses her sense of so valuable a gift from a friend, who shows the Stuarts' best virtues, in the home where domestic happiness and grateful piety dwell.

That the tradition lay in the time of the Commonwealth, has hitherto prevented its writer from delighting herself with

the novels relating to the same periods by two of the most distinguished authors of her country: refraining from the pleasure they must have afforded her, from the apprehension that their admirable paintings would have disheartened her from attempting the ground of the Forty Footsteps; and which she the more especially wished to make her own, one way or other, to fulfil her promise to that effect made, even years ago, to her dearest relative and friend, the brother-Toxophilite, now in a far distant land. As it is, she offers it with the humility of an old archer herself, whose bow has been worn in many fields, and who is almost ready to lay it down, and leave the garlanded target to younger and less weary arms.

JANE PORTER.

ESHER,
December, 1827.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SA

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

COMING OUT;

A TALE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY

MISS ANNA MARIA PORTER.

" What mighty ills from small beginnings flow !"

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

COMING OUT.

Colonel and Mrs. Barry, two careless giddy persons, though beyond a certain age, were one morning listening to the gossip of Dublin, from an elegant English countess, as she waited for fresh post-horses to carry her on to Waterford, when the sound of laughter, remonstrances, entreaties, and commands, from an outer room, made her Ladyship abruptly enquire what all that noise was about. Colonel Barry could do no less than start from his seat, and open the door of the offending room.

The noise was found to arise from a contention between the Colonel's only

son, a fashionable young man, just of age, and his eldest daughter, a blushing girl of fourteen. Mr. Barry having been sent to the green-house upon an errand of Lady Donnington's, had surprised his sister there, dressed up in flowers of every hue, reciting verses to her governess; and, with a mixture of pride and petulance, had dragged her into the house, that he might present her to his acquaintance, the English peeress, who had, at his request, condescended to stop a quarter of an hour at Castle Barry.

Girlish bashfulness and girlish strength were no match for manly obstinacy. Alicia was whirled into the awful presence by one jerk of her brother's arm, and stood for a few moments motionless in the centre of the room. She knew herself to be childishly hung about with flowers; little aware that her own complexion would cause the garden roses and lilies to be overlooked.

As Marcus Barry gaily said he had

brought a little masquerader to present to her Ladyship, Lady Donnington drew Alicia somewhat unceremoniously forward, and scrutinising her cheeks and lips through an eye-glass, as if expecting to detect paint there, exclaimed, while she released her, " Madame Ventadour's bouquet of jewels, I protest!"

Lady Donnington again took her by the hand, and surveyed her from head to foot. The youthful creature she thus contemplated, had as yet only the slight form and flying step of vernal girlhood; but her face was already a blaze of beauty. A significant glance was exchanged between her Ladyship and the mother: Colonel Barry rubbed his hands triumphantly: Marcus Barry looked at his sister as if he had never seen her before: Alicia held down her head, and fancied herself an object of ridicule. The English peeress broke the momentary silence by telling Mr. Barry to take his sister away, for she was evidently longing to get back to her good-humoured governess. Mr. Barry obeyed; and as

Alicia raised her head, her beautiful face almost lightened with pleasure: she was out of the room the next moment.

"What do you call your daughter's hair?" asked Lady Donnington, in a tone of pretty petulance. "Nothing upon earth is like it, except pheasants' feathers — the gold brown ones I mean. — It must be sprinkled with some glittering dust — and what floods of light for eyes! What are they? — Sapphires, amethysts, or diamonds?"

Marcus Barry, who was then entering, was sufficiently acquainted with Lady Donnington's expectations, not to withhold the accustomed tribute of professing himself immensely entertained by so lively and original a mode of extolling his sister; and hazarded, in consequence, a little piquant raillery upon the supposition of Alicia's eyes being the colour of Lady Donnington's lilac bonnet.

Her Ladyship immediately undertook to prove, that by mere dint of excessive lustre, the azure of an eye might be so confused with the delicate glow of small

blood vessels near it, as to appear of a rich purple. Colonel Barry professed himself incapable of saying whether his daughter's eyes were lilac or lead colour; if they pleased Lady Donnington he was delighted. Mrs. Barry owned to having once thought them greyish, but now they seemed to be no colour at all—only very bright. Mr. Barry deponed that certain aged bog-trotters, who pretended to a large acquaintance with the ancient kings of Erin, pronounced them to be of the true Milesian blue. Lady Donnington had done with the subject of eyes, and was now raving upon that of skin. "Alabaster itself!" she exclaimed; "and those lips! so exactly like my bracelets." (Touching one formed of those transparent red beads called Tartar coral.) "Really, Mrs. Barry, you might show her!—How old is she?"

"Fourteen."—

"Fourteen!" echoed her Ladyship; "to think of such a pretty face not being ready to take about, when there are no less than three coronets almost going a

begging! — only fancy her one of the Miss Everleigh's! Poor Lady Charles would die no other death. If your daughter don't fall off, and if you only know how to play such a hand well — Mr. Barry, I charge you not to purloin that flower — it is my property, though just now on the carpet."

In spite of this immediate change of subject, Mrs. Barry was on the verge of asking if she might, at the end of three years, presume to beg Lady Donnington's advice how to play such cards; but recollecting that until this morning she had not even a visiting acquaintance with this luminary of fashion, and that it was considered the height of presumption to ask Lady Donnington anything, she succeeded in keeping silence.

Upon this identical morning, however, Lady Donnington chose to be "divine." She was amused, perhaps she was even flattered, by the sentimental tone of her youngest companion's admiration. "I would not undertake bringing out a young lady for worlds," she

exclaimed to him; "but if I were *forced* to do it, I would certainly come praying and begging for your sister; she would be taken off my hands so directly! — O! there are the horses. Mrs. Barry, do let me advise you to keep your girl quite up, till you bring her out in Dublin. Don't let her wear anything but vast poke bonnets, and ankle-high walking shoes; and wooden shawls — not woollen — for the next three years. Above all, don't let people know even that you have a daughter. Now, Mr. Barry, you may gather up all those beauteous flowers, and put them into my carriage. Do see that my maid has neither left herself nor a certain enormous thatched basket behind: I am ruined if the basket is forgot! Good morning, Mrs. Barry; good morning, Colonel Barry; I am so obliged to you for this load of orange flowers," dropping them nearly all as she spoke, and carelessly walking over those which Mr. Barry had previously let fall on the floor, — and away she went, enlightening her gallant escort as she hurried through the

hall, upon the subject of the thatched basket, and the *fads* within it.

Lady Donnington, after raving of the beautiful child she had seen at Castle Barry, on her rapid way by Milford Haven, totally forgot the bright vision when once established in her own house in London. Immersed in the private politics and parties of *her* world; triumphantly carrying all before her fashion, power, influence, and spurious talent (the meagre talent of saying forced things with an air of ease), she remembered no more of a very short visit to Ireland, than what helped her to a few brilliant allusions, when some of the highest class of absentees fell in her way, and were found worthy of being entertained.

Colonel and Mrs. Barry were, indeed, merely acquaintances of that single half hour which Lady Donnington had condescended to use in repeating to them, as impromptus, a string of malicious pleasantries, or rather scandals, which she had been playing off to other audiences ere she reached Waterford. It is true,

she had seen them both at the Castle; but the Dublin court is as much intruded upon as that of St. James's; so that she would have known of them no more, had not their son been aide-de-camp to a popular general, handsome to boot, emulous of notice, and fertile in expedients for attracting it to himself. Once led to notice Mr. Barry, Lady Donnington found it extremely convenient to have such a person always in attendance, to do her bidding as exactly as Ariel did Prospero's, and with prompt self-love be ever ready to interpret her insolent exactions and unceremonious neglects by fits and starts, into any meaning, except that of intentional slight to himself.

The young aide-de-camp fancied himself Lady Donnington's envied favourite, elevated, therefore, into a rank for which many of his superiors sighed in vain, when, in fact, he was laughed at by one half of the Irishmen, who, knowing little of Lady Donnington's supremacy in the sister kingdom, "wondered how Barry could prefer Autumn to Spring;"

and pitied by those of better feeling, who, knowing her consequence, foresaw the folly and ruin such favour might produce.

Lady Donnington herself had not the slightest measure, in her way of speaking about her new slave: it was, "That good-natured Mr. Barry!"—"That civil, well-behaved person!"—"That best sort of page in the world!"—So that no one could doubt that Lady Donnington looked upon him only as one of those useful persons whom the arrogant and heartless, order about at will, for months or years, and wholly drop when no longer wanted.

For two months had she wasted most of Mr. Barry's time, more of his common sense, and all his money, when the whim which brought her to Ireland took her as suddenly back,—or, rather, she thought she had staid precisely long enough to make all London wish for her; yet not so long as to force them into the discovery that they could go on without her.—So it was, that after a tour along the north coast to see the Giant's Cause-

way, and a tour across the island to Killarney, her Ladyship announced her intention of returning home by Milford Haven; Mr. Barry's paternal home was discovered to lie almost directly in the way to the port of Waterford:—"Lady Donnington must change horses within a mile or two of Castle Barry, why not do his mother the honour of waiting for them at Castle Barry?"—Lady Donnington thought "it was just possible she might do so:"—Marcus Barry was that night half way to Waterford, before his sovereign dictatress had awakened from her first sleep.

One hour after his hasty arrival, servants were marshalled, elegancies arranged, refreshments prepared, flattering accidents pre-concerted, Colonel and Mrs. Barry elate with gratification and expectation, when the commanding Countess appeared.

Her Ladyship could not have entered a hotel with less ceremony, or refused the really elegant *déjeûné* set before her, with a more decided yet unnoticing negative.

She was, however, full of conversation; and though mortifyingly indifferent to what the Barrys piqued themselves upon, the elegance of their furniture, and the costliness of their breakfast China, her admiration of their daughter, together with the hopes it had excited, were a rich equivalent.

After she was gone, Colonel Barry owned that his son had, indeed, acquired a most valuable friend; likely, from her connection with one of the first military characters of the age, to be of much greater service to him than old General Granby. Mrs. Barry made herself sure that Lady Donnington would offer to bring Alicia out as soon as she was seventeen—she read it in her Ladyship's fine piercing eyes.

Upon these two unwarranted notions, these foolish parents almost immediately acted. Marcus was given a *carte blanche* for his future plans; and Alicia was instantly put into a huge straw cage, by way of bonnet.

Important events were the consequences of this visit: in truth, it decided

the fate of every creature to whom Lady Donnington had been uttering her pernicious counsel, without even the excuse of being interested in their advancement. Did we but know the issues of our lightest words!—but our story must moralise for itself.

Colonel Barry, who was just beginning to turn over some notions of needful retrenchment, readily dismissed such unseasonable changes from his mind, at the suggestion of his wife; obliging her yet further, by refraining from damping his son's spirits with the disagreeable intelligence that their West India estates were declining. On the contrary, the Colonel himself felt almost persuaded that the popular delicacies would soon be rum and sugar; and that his particular estates would as surely produce double the quantity of other men's. At all events, money was always to be had on good interest; and tradesmen could wait; and if a grand push could only be made now, the future aggrandisement of their family was a matter of course. Marcus,

translated from Dublin to London, would gain, by his intimacy at Donnington House, a reputation worth ten thousand a year; consequently, he would make some brilliant connection, in addition to rapid military promotion obtained through Lady Donnington's interest. Then Alicia would *come out* under such circumstances as no other commoner's daughter could expect, and with her astonishing beauty must marry highly.

These unwise conclusions Colonel Barry thought, and Mrs. Barry uttered:—when, yielding to his own vanity, therefore, he professed himself convinced by his wife's "good sense," and consented to let Marcus try for an exchange into the Foot Guards. He was further mastered by his lady's judiciousness, when she urged the necessity of not giving up the capital during the years of Alicia's imprisonment. "For supposing Lady Donnington did not offer to bring Alicia out, unless they kept up their acquaintance in Dublin they would not have a soul to present her to when she was of an age

to appear: in that case, they might just as well dig a grave and put her into it at once. There was no such thing, that the Colonel must know, as laying people down and taking them up again. After three seasons' absence from a certain set, a ghost would be just as welcome as yourself. In short, people took it exceedingly ill, when one of their set did such an odd thing as retiring quite into the country, and not giving dinners or parties till just the time when they had a daughter to bring out. Certainly such a way of going on was mean and selfish; and she was sure the Colonel was as much against being called mean and selfish as she was. Nobody could blame people for calling them so."

Colonel Barry was entirely of his wife's opinion; so the town-house was ordered to be re-painted, and a negotiation for removing Marcus from a regiment commanded by a friendly godfather was immediately commenced.

Although the young man was taken into this consultation, at least into as

much of it as concerned himself, his private ruminations took a view of Lady Donnington's sentiments towards his family which might, perhaps, have astonished even his mother, had she been privy to them. With the most egregious vanity he thought himself tolerably certain that Lady Donnington was rather in love with him, and quite sure that he was excessively in love with her.

Now the lady in question was positively forty, but she looked thirty, and she magnanimously owned to five and thirty! Mr. Barry was one and twenty! Lady Donnington had been a widow ten years, during which time she had been gradually ascending higher and higher in the scale of elegant opinion; successively mastering every other candidate for the throne of fashion, whatever was their ground of pretension, until she now stood without a rival, wielding an absolute sceptre, and dictating laws to old and young.

"Beauty," she used to say, "is necessary to marry a young lady; but extensive

power has far other sources." True to this theory, the titled widow aimed at subjugating both sexes; fascinating some, and compelling the greater number to acknowledge her sovereignty.

It may be supposed that so young a widow had had her lovers and her proposals. Not a few were positively bewitched by her fashion into fancying themselves animated by a real passion for her; and several were delighted to find a jointure of 5000*l.* a year, with two fine houses, united in the person of a clever woman of the supremest *bon-ton*; but, like our maiden queen, Lady Donnington knew the value of personal freedom too well to part with it; and having none of that queen's weaker sensibilities to make refusal sacrifice, she could, with better address, and happier indifference, retain, as parts of her splendid *cortége*, those whom she declined to accept in the quality of lovers. In truth, as her Ladyship never inspired affection, or even a real passion, each rejected admirer received his *congé* with proper submission:

it soon became the *ton* not to be in love with Lady Donnington, but to follow her with open profession of will-worship and voluntary slavery.

Yet there was nothing winning in Lady Donnington; nothing flattering; nothing insinuating: she seemed to take the world at the point of the bayonet; meeting every attempt at the recovery of free action by her slaves with a hardy resoluteness, which invariably reconquered them. Some persons she held in awe by her bitter jests, some by her power of excluding them from other houses of gay resort; some she allured by her fertile invention of new modes of amusing or distinguishing, and some by the mere *éclat* of her name: that name, uncoupled with a single epithet expressive either of regard or admiration, was heard echoing round the whole circle of fashion, as if any addition whatever, would have taken from its air of authority.

Lady Donnington's last season in London had been one of complete success; the fashion of Donnington House had

swallowed up that of every other, except such as shone with reflected light: even the opera was deserted when she chose to announce French readings every Tuesday. Such overgrown power, however, was only to be maintained by coquetry upon the grandest scale; an affectation of caprice or indifference to hundreds of men, women, and boys. Lady Donnington, after ordering her house in town to be newly fitted up during Easter, and circulating innumerable rumours about the time and the manner of her re-opening it to the world of fashion, suddenly crossed over to Ireland, on what she called a visit to her cousin the vice-queen, and set all Dublin in a blaze. At that brilliant moment Marcus Barry was presented to her; accident having afforded him an opportunity of distinguishing himself from the crowd who were eagerly putting themselves forward to attract the English peeress's attention.

For the first days and weeks our young man was sane enough to see in Lady Donnington only an agreeable woman

of a certain age, by whose interest he might look for quick promotion in the army, and from whose elevating notice he must derive benefit in many inferior ways; he felt that it had already raised him above such of his companions as were not allied to nobility, and he flattered himself that it would soon give him that decided stamp of fashion which ever afterwards makes a man current in the highest circles, and privileges him at last in slighting the ladder itself by which he has ascended.

From this comparatively easy state, Mr. Barry was roused by the absurd remarks of one divison of his acquaintance, and by the mischievous sport of another; he heard it insinuated from both these different sets, that Lady Donnington certainly "was caught at last; that he was a lucky fellow to have 5000*l.* a year, and a fine woman at his command; that it must be his own fault if he were not her lord and master in six months." — In less than six weeks Mr. Barry believed

himself desperately in love with Lady Donnington.

Some excuses for such credulity might be urged in favour of our novice. It was his misfortune to have parents even sillier than himself: he had never been intimately thrown in the path of such a dazzling meteor as Lady Donnington; and she was one whom no ruth, no care of consequences to any human being, ever stopped on the road to her own pleasure or purposes. In her rapid tour to the Giant's Causeway and Killarney, made in company with another female party, she had travelled as usual with a guard of equestrians. Mr. Barry got admitted into the honour of this imperial guard, and having elicited the gallant idea of calling it Lady Donnington's Legion of Honour, had the further glory of giving the first idea of an appropriate decoration.

Lady Donnington's name was Margaret, and a *marguerite* was the badge. Mr. Barry had the additional favour conferred upon him of being permitted to

order, and subsequently to pay for, all the enamelled daisies demanded for the occasion.

In flying about from one object of curiosity to another, just as the whim seized Lady Donnington, without reference to map or consideration, this pleasure-hunting party got over the whole month of July, and nearly as many hundred miles as they had beguiled weeks. At Killarney they separated; some of them back to the neighbourhood of Dublin, others to their own distant country-houses, and others to the houses of other people. Lady Donnington dismissed her body-guard with relentless command, and would have proceeded without other delay than passing a night at the house of an acquaintance in Wexford, had not the passionate solicitations of Mr. Barry aroused her into calling at his father's, where she had appeared and disappeared like a flash of lightning.

It may be imagined that Mr. Barry, in his character of lover, was left plunged in utter night: but the love which has its

root and stem in vanity, has this prodigious advantage over that more sensitive sort which feeds upon the delightful qualities of its object; it can do extremely well in absence, so long as it is ministered to by self-exalting thoughts, friendly hints of its power, and the memory of decided triumphs. Marcus, therefore, after Lady Donnington's departure, was in a state of rapture, rather than despair: for though her visit had been so brief, yet a visit at all, was next door to a declaration in his favour, since "Lady Donnington *must* be aware, Lady Donnington *must* think." The silly young man never conjectured that Lady Donnington might *not* think—might *not* be aware of the possibility of a boy like him imagining her actuated by any thing beyond the habit of acting precisely as she chose towards sundry persons, without reference to their speculations upon her motives.

In applying to agents or general officers, in writing and answering letters upon the important business of his ex-

change, in retailing again and again all the poignant sarcasms of Lady Donnington, and enumerating all the exquisite societies to which he had been introduced in her train, Marcus Barry contrived to get through a whole month in the country, with little better society than that of his own family, and of others equally well born, yet less refined than they. His mother was enchanted to observe how very fine he had become in every look, gesture, and expression, since his last Dublin season; and his father felt that if he were still to have the gratification of hearing his son talk solely of peers and peeresses, he must strain every nerve to afford him an allowance equal to the rank of his company.

Mr. Barry's eldest sister alone (for his youngest was too young to be sensible to any thing except the absence of petting from him,) saw the change in her brother with regret. He had never been a very fond brother, but he had not been an unkind one; and a sister's heart is rarely exacting. Alicia, therefore, had always

seen him return to school after his holydays with childish sorrow, and had wept bitterly when at sixteen he left home entirely for a commission in the army. Since then, every short return of his had first saddened and then deadened her affection; now, the obvious silliness and selfish vanity of his character threw an additional damp upon such a feeling, leaving her to mourn in secret over his total want of sympathy with her pure and innocent pleasures. The notorious difficulty of getting by any means into one of the regiments of Guards employed nearly six months ere it was surmounted. The transfer cost Colonel Barry so large a sum of ready money, that he was obliged to borrow it of his own agent at a high interest; he was, moreover, imprudent enough to fix his son's allowance at a rate beyond what he ought to have afforded a single young man even in the most flourishing times of his property: at present, such liberality was madness. Charged with numberless flattering messages from his mo-

ther to Lady Donnington, and well lectured by the general to whom he had been aide-de-camp, Mr. Barry then hastened, in the month of February, from Ireland to England like a bird into a snare.

Leaving him to the adventures of a packet-boat and a mail-coach, it may be well to give some account of his family previous to their knowledge of his titled patroness.

Colonel Barry started in life as a soldier of fortune; but having good blood in his veins, and a handsome person, he married when on service in the West Indies, the only daughter of a great man there, and in due time became master, in right of his wife, of two valuable estates. Upon this accession of wealth, he quitted the army, returned to his own country, and bought an estate in the county of Waterford, because it bore the name of his family, and was indeed a part of his ancestors' early possessions. Col. Barry brought home with him certain garrison habits of familiar and free living,

which suited perfectly well with such of the Irish as had not then allowed themselves to distinguish between waste and hospitality; his first years of residence, therefore, at Castle Barry, were purely jovial: but one or two winters spent in Dublin, and, a few finer acquaintance made, altered the tone of the Colonel's pleasures; and, as he never had been either a drunkard or a profligate, it cost him nothing, personally, to leave off parties where Mind had not the smallest share. Not that Colonel Barry rose higher in the scale of reform than that of exchanging coarse revelry for frivolous tastes: in them he found his proper element, and in them he rested.

Mrs. Barry, too, who was very pretty, and very silly, and very idle, had no way of getting through time but that of being amused; so that their house was always full of company, or they were themselves at other people's houses, or they were in Dublin. Mrs. Barry's children were therefore seldom with their parents. Marcus was sent to school; and the girls

duly submitted to nursery governess and finishing governess.

Out of eight children thus lightly cared for, only three had survived infancy, — Marcus, Alicia, and Flora.

Although heir to four thousand a year (such being the original return of Mrs. Barry's estates), Marcus was so passionately in love with a becoming uniform, that a kind hearted godfather, mistaking this passion for true military ardour, actually presented him with a cornetcy in his own regiment, then in Scotland, and when it came to Ireland appointed him one of his aides-de-camp. Lucky occurrences had afforded the young man an opportunity of purchase which his father readily seized for him; so that when he began his career in Dublin, he was a lieutenant and a staff-officer at one-and-twenty. Dublin is said to be the very best situation for learning parade-duty in perfection; if so, Mr. Barry was inexcusable for disappointing his veteran patron, and remaining an indifferent officer.

Meanwhile the little Alicia and the

baby Flora, between whose ages there was five years' difference, were alternately spoilt and ill used by different subordinate attendants and teachers during as many twelvemonths as they were years old. Whenever their papa or mamma had them out of the nursery or the school room, it was to a feast or to a fête: they were then prodigiously dressed, coaxed, and kissed for the moment, and soon sent away loaded with good things or pretty things; so that, although the little girls rarely enjoyed this blissful admission to their parents' presence, they could not but associate such ideas of indulgence and kindness with their images as were by no means unfavourable to the growth of natural affection.

Neither from father nor mother, however, were they likely to pick up, even by blessed chance, a single seed of right principle. Colonel and Mrs. Barry had no principles whatever; neither good ones nor bad ones: they were equally good natured, equally inert minded; they thought of life only as a thing to be en-

joyed (at least by the rich); and since their enjoyment of that *intrusted talent* did not consist in robbing, maiming, or slaying, nor in wilfully injuring others; and as they went once to church almost every Sunday when they were not travelling; and never thought of questioning, nor even of making what they heard there enter into their hearts, they were comfortably satisfied, that when they died they must go to heaven like all other inoffensive persons who had no particular desire of being over good.

Governesses chosen by such parents were not likely to be much better qualified than themselves for awakening young and ardent hearts to a sense of their danger from their own natural frailty, in addition to the trials and temptations of the world. Those appointed to unfold the characters of the Miss Barry's were wholly incompetent in the highest sense; but perfectly able to furnish them liberally with accomplishments. Providence, however, graciously supplied their deficiency.

The nearest neighbour to Colonel Barry was a retired man of letters, to whom a cheerful maiden sister, and an only daughter, supplied the place of a dear and buried wife. Besides this daughter, Mr. McManus had the charge of an orphan boy, placed under his care for tuition until the return of an uncle from India, to whom the child was heir. Rose McManus, then a girl of sixteen, loved children; so that, finding herself in the vicinity of a sweet little girl, whose parents were occupied with other objects, she soon contrived to have her often committed to her care.

Alicia was only three years old when she was first caressed by Miss McManus, and invited by little Jocelyn Hastings to come and pick flowers out of his garden. From that period, until she attained the age of fourteen, (when the marriage of Rose carried her from Ireland,) the happy child used to fly on all occasions to Mount Pleasant, as to a dearer home, though a far less splendid one, than Castle Barry.

For the first five years, certainly, Alicia's principal attraction was Jocelyn, who, though so many years her senior, delighted in playing with, and protecting her: but first the death of a baby-brother, to whom she had tenderly wedded her little heart; and then an awakened interest in older people's pursuits, aroused her from play, and brought her more frequently to the knee of Mr. McManus, and the side of his daughter.

Colonel and Mrs. Barry were such good-natured gad-abouts, that they were really pleased to give their governess a share of pleasure: Miss McManus's fancy for children made this kindness easy to them; so that when they went to pass Christmas from home, Mrs. Brudenell was allowed to accept the invitations of her friends, and Alicia was at once translated to her paradise, the low wainscotted parlour, and turf-fire of Mount Pleasant. Even after the little Flora was necessarily added to the party, the warm-hearted McManus's contrived to claim this yearly indulgence; making the season

of frost and snow, the season of joy to two loving and neglected children.

During summer, Colonel and Mrs. Barry were more at home; but even then they had too much company, ever coming and going, to let them care a great deal for their little girls' society; so that Mount Pleasant still found means of getting back, for her few leisure half hours, the elder of the two.

Whenever Miss McManus knew that their fine neighbours were most confined by visitors, she used to despatch begging billets to the mamma or governess, which generally brought the young Alicia very carefully over-dressed, through the boundary screen of firs which divided the grounds of Castle Barry from the little shrubbery of Mount Pleasant, either to be rowed upon the small loch, by which both residences stood, or to drink tea in a rude summer-house, on an island no bigger than a grass-plot.

At good Miss Judy McManus's early tea-table, where, perhaps, were gathered one friend or more of the same character

as those they visited, even their lightest conversation was never unimproving. Travelled men of science, earnest divines, artists, and poets, occasionally tarried there, like heavenly visitants to the Patriarchs, leaving behind them bright traces of intellectual glory. Not only young Jocelyn, but the younger and softer Alicia, insensibly imbibed opinions and received impressions which the after world, with all its washing of waves, could not wholly obliterate.

In her walks with Rose M'Manus she learned to feel the presence of a beneficent and adorable God at all times; and to love the inquiry of how best to please him. Rose had an engaging way of imparting her own amiable views of a superintending Providence; and though her mind was not of great stretch, her relish for every beautiful work of creation was lively, and her gratitude for the smallest blessing, adequate to her clear idea of each earthly benefit being far above human desert.

This feeling was contagious, and this

taste was to be acquired, or brought out, by listening to her remarks; so that Alicia Barry gradually became as much an enthusiast in nature as Rose herself, and bid fair to "worship nature's God" with thoughts as humble and enlightened as hers.

During her earliest years, Mr. McManus, who was placidly fond of her, used to take her upon his knee to teach her the names of certain stars, and the properties of flowers. Mrs. Judy allowed her to run after her, from parlour to store-room, from poultry-yard to dairy; when the good lady, who was her own housekeeper, found various little offices adapted to her childish age, yet sufficiently important to teach lessons of usefulness.

Jocelyn Hastings often volunteered the duty of hearing her French tasks, smoothing difficulties to her, and rewarding her afterwards by impromptu tales, told purposely to check or foster some obvious feeling of the moment.

Even at the age of boyhood, Jocelyn

gave token of noble manhood in riper years. His habits and disposition already denoted that his life would be a ministry of kindness on earth, having a yet higher aim than that of mere mortal approbation. No two beings could be more unlike each other than he was to himself in his hours of study and of pleasure. When released from duty he was the very spirit of joyous mirth and eager exercise; and, except that he never wilfully hurt a living thing, or destroyed an inanimate one, was to all appearance the wildest and most unthinking of happy boys: but once recalled to thought, and settled down to reading or listening, his whole soul seemed gathered to that one point, so that those who saw him only at those moments knew but half his character.

Jocelyn's earliest propensity had been that of benevolence, displaying itself at first in infantine attempts to restore the lives of drowned puppies and kittens; then in going rounds of charity to a superannuated pointer in Mr. M^c^Manus's stable; to a blind horse and a lame don-

key in a field; and, lastly, to an old turf-cutter and a disabled flax-spinner in one of the cabins. The little Alicia never failed being of these parties, whenever she could do so. Something was always to be carried to each pensioner every day; and at Dennis's cabin the children's riotous spirits were so freely indulged, and so truly shared by the hearty old man, that it was well worth Alicia's crying fit afterwards, when, on getting home, her blue sash was found to be dabbled in the mire of the bog, or her second-best frock torn by scrambling after Jocelyn through a hedge.

Jocelyn called her his little wife; and Alicia had already such a proper notion of a wife's duty, that she never hesitated following him through bog or brier.

In this way both the little girl's health and spirits were indemnified for the drudgery of studying mere accomplishments under an insipid governess, who could not infuse one quickening principle into their attainment; and who deemed any movement quicker than a regulated walk, a sin against *young ladyism*.

So continually participating in each other's pleasures and employments, as did the two favourites of Rose M'Manus, it is not surprising that one, at least, (the youngest and softest) should learn to believe, with childish trust in the future, that they never should be separated: but as the time of Jocelyn's recall to England drew near, it began to be talked of, and Alicia's little heart at length became sensible, that such a calamity hung over her. Whenever any allusion was made to this dreaded recall, she would burst into tears of sudden agony, which the agitated boy could only silence by assuring her, that if his uncle gave him leave, he would come back some day and fetch her.

The fatal period arrived: Jocelyn's uncle returned from India, and he was summoned to England. Alicia was then only ten years old, but Jocelyn was fifteen. There was a serious romance in his character, which, awakening premature sensibility to affection, and perhaps to personal beauty, made him delight to think how often he had told Alicia he

would come back for her, if permitted: and, coupling a sort of obligation with inclination, therefore, even at fifteen, indulged in such visions as are known only, at so early an age, to minds of strong imagination.

To superficial observation Jocelyn seemed to be less affected, because less afflicted than his former little playmate, when they parted. She showed the whole of her artless heart laid waste for the time by the sorrow of innocent childish love; such love as a sister bears to a favourite brother. She thought they never would meet again, because they were parting, and because she felt no power in herself to end their separation. Jocelyn, on the contrary, was conscious to something of power, from having the wish and the will within him; he was, besides, eager for academic honours; and anticipated with natural ambition the hour when his friends at Mount Pleasant should hear of his having gained the first prize at Cambridge.

Jocelyn's aspirations were not disap-

pointed; he distinguished himself at college, and Alicia heard of it; and Alicia always sent him a kind message in return for his frequent presents of affectionate remembrance through Mr. M^c^Manus. By degrees her tears dried up on his account, as her heart grew into closer intimacy with that of Rose. Alicia was reaching the age of fervid attachments, an age at which almost every woman must remember how devoted she had been to some older person of her own sex, by whose graces or virtues she was then captivated.

Loving Rose M^c^Manus as the kindest of human beings, and looking up to her as the most gifted, conscious of owing all her best knowledge to her, Alicia's greatest ambition became to please Miss M^c^Manus; her greatest happiness, the enjoyment of her society. What, then, was her utter desolation when this too natural idolatry was checked, by the removal of its gentle object? Miss M^c^Manus married. She had been engaged from the age of twenty to an amiable young

man, whose circumstances did not allow of their union till some years afterwards. Though deeply attached to him, and often yearning to mingle his name with her pensive or animated remarks upon passing scenes, when conversing with Alicia, this right-judging young woman forbore, by doing so, to awaken premature sympathies in a breast evidently formed to feel soon and intensely. She never spoke of Felix Beresford before her, except in the full home circle. When Mr. Beresford came to claim his affianced bride, he was, therefore, beheld by Alicia as a stranger.

Miss M'Manus's marriage happened shortly after the visit of Lady Donnington to Castle Barry. It was so hurried, and so unexpected by her young friend, that she was yet in the first stupor of amazed sorrow, when the newly-married pair sailed from Cork to the place of Mr. Beresford's temporary residence across the Atlantic. In their parting interview Mrs. Beresford could not refrain from giving a sketch of her own little history,

and of the principles which had guided her and her admirable husband; not to exalt either herself or him, but to leave Alicia something beneficial to remember, if ever she should be placed in circumstances at all similar. It was a lesson of cheerful self-sacrifice to filial affections, and of humble trust in Providence either for future union, or for certain submission to ultimate disappointment; and, told with tears of agitated thankfulness, was never forgotten.

As in the most affecting parting scene ever described, in "weeping David exceeded," so she that went, wept even more than she that staid behind; for she had another grief in addition to that of leaving her friend, — the grief that the parents of this innocent girl were alive to no higher views for her than those of the frivolous world; and she dreaded the effect of that world, when Alicia would be led into it by persons whom she was bound to honour and obey. There were but a few certain precepts which could be given as safeguards, but one rule for

conformity or non-conformity: these Mrs. Beresford repeated; and commending her dear young friend to refer every subordinate duty to them, with her full heart's fullest blessing, left her to the care of Heaven.

Abandoned to feelings just short of despair, after her friend's departure, Alicia was the passive creature her mother wished her to become, when Lady Donnington enjoined the use of poke bonnets, and utter exclusion from human society. She never missed the lace-frocks, bracelets, necklaces, and children's balls, with which she used to be treated. She scarcely remembered that she had once liked the finery with which mothers of bad taste are so fond of destroying the bloom of young cheeks and young hearts at the same time. For several weeks she was actually heart-broken; but letters came from Mrs. Beresford, as she touched at Madeira, and joy gleamed out again.

After one letter Alicia had something tangible always to look to in such arrivals: in her little sister she had a dear depend-

ent thing to caress; and in Mr. McManus an object of gratifying attention. Her heart shook off its load; the capacity for happiness returned; active employments were resumed; but her original exuberance of spirits was never regained. She had begun to suffer, she had therefore begun to think: and it is when we begin to think, unprompted by riper minds, that our characters undergo vital changes. Alicia's became shaded by a little pensiveness.

As Mrs. Judy McManus regularly bustled away her whole morning in the business of her small *ménage*, and as Mr. McManus devoted his to study, it was only during evenings that the absence of Rose was felt. To obtain permission for supplying her place at such times, Alicia submitted herself entirely to her governess throughout the day; and, grateful for the granted boon, applied diligently to every branch of her education. Thus sincerely striving to become mistress of those accomplishments, which give grace to more substantial acquirements, she enchanted her parents, who were living on the anti-

cipation of her brilliant *entrée* in life in consequence.

Music would have been her vocation by choice; but she was a timid singer, and her sweet voice, therefore, rarely answered expectation, when called upon for exercise beyond the domestic circle. Mrs. Barry, who never felt music for herself, was so often disappointed by her daughter's performance, that she concluded her voice was not a good one, and turned her sole attention to the surer excellence of dancing.

Dancing being one of those accomplishments which may or may not be considered an exhibition, according to the artless or calculating character of the dancer, was so completely practised as a delightful, joy-inspiring exercise by Alicia, that it soon grew into her chief perfection. The floating motion of the slow sort, and the bound or winged flight of gayer ones, were equally pleasurable to a young creature, whose form and humour were alike pliable. She waltzed with her brother when he was with them, and joined

in quadrilles formed entirely of young ladies, perhaps younger than herself, till her slight girlish form gradually assumed the lovely roundness of perfected symmetry, and grace played about her movements like sunbeams among waving boughs. Thus she grew into unconscious beauty: countenance developing with mind; and sensibility deepening or adding a complexion truly blent —

"By nature's sweet and cunning hand laid on."

Her mother's frequent exclamation of "How pretty!" from its monotony was little noticed: it pointed out no particular beauty; it awakenened no curiosity of taste; so that Alicia was not a whit the more inclined to study her own face in the glass after its almost mechanical iteration. Had she done so, it would not have pleased her greatly, since it differed essentially from that of Rose McManus, who, from being loved, was deemed most lovely.

Assuredly infinite pains were taken to keep the secret of Alicia's beauty from

discovery. She was never seen by the company at Castle Barry; never permitted to go any where to tea, except to Mount Pleasant when there were no visitors there; never danced, except with young girls; and never appeared at church undisguised by a large projecting bonnet, about the shape of a telescope, and a shawl too stiff for taking any other form than that of a triangle.

To changes and restrictions like these Alicia was thoroughly reconciled: she found that she had less to care about, when she planted her flowers, or stole into a mud-floored cabin to spin awhile for some old favourite. She could now dismiss the thought that mud would soil, and thin drapery rend; and instead of being dressed and brought for exhibition into the drawing-room, she had free leave to sit in her own quiet chamber, reading, thinking, or writing to her beloved Mrs. Beresford.

Thus employed, we shall leave her and return to her brother.

The London winter having begun unusually early that year, by the time Mr.

Barry reached his destination, Lady Donnington was in her fullest career of splendid dissipation; and had as completely forgotten her Irish acquaintance, as if she were a disembodied spirit entered upon a higher existence than that of earth. However, as this oblivion was not *malice prepense*, when, after a fortnight's fruitless attempts to be admitted at her house, Mr. Barry met her in the waiting-room of the Opera, she lifted him at once from the depths of despair, by the exclamation of "Mr. Barry! — how long have you been in town? — Why didn't you come to me?"

Mr. Barry hurried out something about having done himself the honour of calling two or three times; something, too, of having written a note to Her Ladyship; but his agitation was obvious, and jealous self-love made him instantly feel the ridicule to which his deplorable nervousness at that moment laid him open.

By good luck Lady Donnington was not in a malicious mood; at least not towards him: so she loitered and talked

to him; allowed him to help on her shawl when it was dropping off; commissioned him to call her carriage; and, though handed into it by another, bade him, under pain of her displeasure for life, come and see her very often.

Lady Donnington was precisely of that consequence in her own set, which gives the power of noticing whom we please, and provoking whom we please; and, being an adept in the art of keeping up her fashion by exciting petty rivalries, it suited her just at that moment to flash a new slave in the eyes of a tardy one. She was, therefore, carelessly earnest, if such a phrase may be allowed, in desiring the handsome, elegant-looking Guardsman "to call on her the very next day, and tell her quantities about Ireland."

Mr. Barry was profuse in professions of "being only too delighted to obey;" and, as her Ladyship's carriage drove off, walked away in an opposite direction.

This rencontre with a woman whom he had begun to think meant "completely to cut him," and whose charac-

ter for fashion was magnified by nearer approach, was too much for so weak a head. Intoxicated in proportion as he had before been mortified, he reached his own lodgings in Regent Street before his thoughts were out of their chaos. Had he met such a reception from Lady Donnington directly after his arrival in London, and at her own house, it is to be feared that the mad notion with which he came from Ireland, of her strong preference, would have increased to extravagance; but two weeks of disappointment and neglect and irritation, added to the conversation of his brother officers, had brought him to his senses upon that one point. He had learned that it was not at all necessary to act the enamoured to Lady Donnington, nay, that she ridiculed sentimental admiration; and although this account did not wholly destroy lurking vanity, it succeeded in smothering any outward show of so absurd a feeling.

With a spirit greatly checked, and a livelier sense of Lady Donnington's supreme dominion than he had felt in

Dublin, he now thought over the circumstances of their recent meeting. In spite of its agreeable suddenness, there was something unpleasant in the remembrance. Lady Donnington had not remarked upon his assurance that he had thrice left his card, and once a note at her door; she had omitted asking after his mother and sister, and had spoken of his father as Admiral Barry. From any other person these tokens would have been decisive in his mind, either of their intention to be uncivil, or their actual indifference, past as well as present; but a different version might be made of them by a man determinately deaf to his mind's conscience. Lady Donnington might, in fact, be surprised at meeting him, which would account for her omissions. By miscalling the father and forgetting the mother, she certainly showed that the son had power to bewilder her a little: yet any direct display of emotion Mr. Barry knew was a thing not to be looked for in a woman of the world. Lady Donnington could not enter into a

minute defence of herself and accusation of her servants before so many witnesses, therefore had passed by the subject of his note and cards.

After cogitations like these, it may be supposed that Mr. Barry was among the earliest of Lady Donnington's visitors the ensuing day. She had graciously named the half hour before she went to the Park as the most likely time for him to find her at home; and, possessed of that important secret, he went and found a perfect assembly. Fine men and fine ladies were lounging among the monstrous wildernesses of a modern fine room; where flowering shrubs, piles of china, huddled masses of ottomans and tables, the latter covered with all sorts of *bijoux*, suggested the idea of a bazaar rather than of a room to live and move in.

No assembly is half so awful as a morning one; its very seeming of ease and licence aggravates the alarm it creates in the uninitiated. The *no introduction*— the few cordial or careless words bestowed by the mistress of the house—

the momentary pause of the general buzz — and then the return of each small division to their own especial conversation, — above all, the re-absorption of the solitary visitor's only acquaintance, — these are circumstances which may well try the stoutest nerves, and quail the proudest spirit. Marcus Barry was doomed to their fullest horrors. As if fortune mischievously sought to show him his own lamentable disparity of pretensions, he was announced in the same breath with a Lord Lewis Rivers. Lady Donnington, ready attired either for driving or walking, was sitting at a little table, trying to arrange the different pieces of a puzzle into mathematical form, under the direction of a member of the upper house. The only notice she took of her two visitors, as they were announced, was a prettily pettish command, "Not to utter! — not to stir!" — a command which Lord Lewis disobeyed with perfect *sang-froid*, by going forward to another table strewed over with fruit, bride's cake, and silver favours, with the

easy exclamation of, "O, if there's eating to be had here, I'm in luck," directly commencing an attack upon what he found. Poor Barry, meanwhile, remained awkwardly uncertain of his course on this unknown sea, where he saw not one friendly port to make for.

Of all men, Marcus Barry was the least qualified to get well through such a dilemma; for he was vain and irritable, subject to fits of presumption and to fits of humiliation. He had sufficient tact to feel that he ought to know every person present, had he been in the right set after his transfer to England; — that he ought to have been at the marriage of a titled pair the day before, whose cake and favours were now tossing about Lady Donnington's sitting-room. He knew this, and felt mortified that Lady Donnington should thus see he was nobody in himself; — but, forcing an air of pleasantry, he bowed, and announced himself fixed until the enchantress would revoke her spell.

Lady Donnington did not please to

revoke her spell until she had conquered the bits of mother-of-pearl which she was pushing about with more vivacity than cleverness. She then started up, scolded Lord Lewis for devouring the Marchioness of Croyland's cake, and purloining a favour, by way of making the world think their old quarrel had been made up; thanked Mr. Barry for having proved to her that there *was* such a thing as a cast-iron man; answering his astonished look by the exclamation of, " You *can* be nothing less, Mr. Barry, or you never could have stood upright, such ages, in the middle of the room." Mr. Barry was very near forfeiting his cast-iron reputation at this cruel pleasantry; but as the privileged speaker had no purpose of annihilating, she went on with an expansion of good humour, — " Those silver bows remind me of that amusing folly — my Legion. What *has* become of all my Knights ? — I quite forget who they were. — Were not you one of my imperial guard, Lord Lewis ?"

" I love you to distraction, Lady Don-

nington," was the careless reply; "but it is much beyond my poor ability to enter a regiment for you. — Any thing short of that, and dancing quadrilles with your friend Miss Everleigh."

"My friend!" repeated Lady Donnington with a gesture of abhorrence; "how provoking you are sometimes! and what are you doing in England, Mr. Barry? For business—or to dance quadrilles instead of Lord Lewis Rivers? — how public spirited of you!"

Mr. Barry did not see that he was half ridiculed: he answered rather flippantly, that his business consisted in taking a few guards, and walking up and down St. James's Street; adding, that if Lady Donnington would become a purchaser, he would show his public spiritedness by opening a shop for the sale of Irish poplins, having brought over quantities.

"O! open a shop! pray open a shop, Mr. Barry," exclaimed his divinity; "we will all buy of you."

"Of course, and never pay!" observed Lord Lewis Rivers, deliberately twisting

off the only rose that was blown upon the most forward plant. Lady Donnington denounced him as a base plunderer in a friendly country; then turning again to the young Irishman (who never before stood in such need of a dip in the Shannon), assured him Lord Lewis was quite right, for she was so horridly poor this year she did not mean to pay for any thing.

The grave-looking senator who had been her instructor over the puzzle, observed, that he saw no chance of the patriotic warehouse turning out a good speculation; therefore, the liberal proprietor had better throw the whole stock upon her Ladyship's hands, simply to bring poplins into fashion. This was said in good-natured pity for the young Guardsman's obvious embarrassment how to make a present; and met with the success it deserved. — Lady Donnington avowed herself ready to accept and give away as many Irish stuffs as Mr. Barry would bestow upon her, voting for their

immediate appearance. "Where did Mr. Barry live?" — "In Regent Street." — "Had he any creature living that could give her maid the poplins?" Luckily Mr. Barry had a servant who never was out of the way; and as Mr. Barry must not go himself, Lady Donnington's maid was sent off in the barouche waiting for her lady, and returned with so many pieces of the richest poplins and tabinets, that it was almost laughable.

Lady Donnington's eyes did laugh ungratefully, though she exclaimed rapturously at seeing one piece of a colour she professed to have been routing out all the shops in town for, in vain. Marcus Barry felt once more suspicious of being an object of entertainment rather than companionship; and his colour rose while males and females gathered round the scene of display.

One or two elderly young ladies were extremely civil to him, after he was presented to them; for Mr. Barry was decidedly good-looking; he was in the Guards; and they concluded, both from

his *gaucherie* and his presents, that he must be immensely rich.

Most of the men, particularly the ill-looking ones, eyed him superciliously, and were not to be entrapped out of their evident resolution *not to know him*. But two of those of the better natured, hearing Lady Donnington inquire if he were not going into the Park, asked to be presented to her friend, that they might ride together in her train. Mr. Barry *was* going into the Park, and his groom was now leading his horse round the square, in company with the grooms of his new acquaintance. A general movement now took place: some of the gentlemen walked off, some rode off; Lord Lewis Rivers fixed himself in a balcony, over which he leaned, attempting to say good things to the different persons as they mounted or sauntered out. Lady Donnington in vain desired him to ring for Lady Mandeville's carriage, — to see if the Miss Danvers' horses were in the street. Lord Lewis knew his licence, and he moved not until every other

vehicle had drawn off, and Lady Donnington's light barouche waited for her and her nieces. Her Ladyship then pushed even her favourite poplin back upon the table strewed with cake and fruit; Mr. Barry's devotional look was non-effective; her hand was given to the insolent yet watchful Lord Lewis; and the two young ladies were left to the temporary care of our Guardsman.

All mortifications were effaced, every wound staunched, when Mr. Barry found himself walking by the side of Lady Donnington in Kensington Gardens, and saw every eye, as he thought, gazing after and envying him. The greater proportion of persons there were of a decidedly lower sphere, yet even they were of that well-conditioned class, who are *the great people* of a third set, and who know every person of fashion's face, carriage, and liveries; nay, who do occasionally jostle with their proper persons at a fancy charity ball, &c.

By these people Mr. Barry was evidently remarked as a *new* fine young

man; and while inquiring whispers and flattering conjectures about his name and rank met his ear from passing groupes, he began to feel as if their suppositions were patents of nobility, and that he was, indeed, the young Duke of Lochinvar, or the Earl of Ullswater.

There is something perniciously intoxicating in public notice: under its heady influence Mr. Barry lost all remembrance of what had gone so far towards opening his eyes, and showing him his true, at least safest, place in society: for as Lady Donnington went on with the step of a queen, and the undauntedness of a stage-queen, talking to all of her party behind, or in advance, regardless of the thronging strangers attracted by her odd expressions, he was vain enough to conclude that his presence had something to do with her excessive spirits, and his own rose accordingly. In short, after three hours wasted in the Mall, and on the wall of Kensington Gardens; after listening to hear the band of the regiment then on

duty, and laughing repeatedly at Lady Donnington's flippant sallies, he mounted his horse and made one in the swarm of fashionable equestrians who chose to be seen all the length of the drive, talking in at the windows of Lady Donnington's carriage.

From that auspicious day Mr. Barry had a very fair share of Lady Donnington's distinguishing notice; that is, he was always sent to when any thing was wanted which it would have hazarded Lady Donnington's empire to have exacted of less humble votaries: he was everlastingly permitted to pay for every body at every exhibition or summer theatre; he was employed to smuggle over Limerick gloves from Ireland and artificial flowers from France; to get China crapes out of Indiamen (China crape being then contraband); to bring her all the new publications, without hope of seeing them again; to be disengaged whenever Lady Donnington invited or wanted him; and, whatever be the state of his purse, be prepared to take as many tickets for be-

nefit concerts and balls off her hands as remained upon them after very slight exertions.

This mode of getting a footing in the best society was ruinous to a young man's desire of suiting his expenditure to his income. "But what could a young man do?" Mr. Barry continually asked himself. Lady Donnington evidently never thought of money (she certainly did not, for any other than herself). How could *he* appear so sordid or parsimonious? It is true he saw men of larger incomes than his make a stand against such encroachments; either by a manly profession of poverty, or by quietly begging her Ladyship to pay for their admission to exhibitions or theatres; but he was neither fashionable enough nor intrepid enough for such bold measures. He felt that it was half his father's fault that he was brought into this unequal companionship, and was not inclined to quarrel with the justice of his father's pocket suffering a loss in consequence. Meanwhile his private thoughts upon another

subject began daily to decline in pleasureableness. He first fancied himself ridiculously jealous of Lady Donnington; then, that she was trying how much he would bear from her; lastly, that it was much too like a boy to be in love with a woman older than himself. Perhaps he came sooner to this decision because otherwise there seemed a probability of his finding out that her Ladyship had never thought of him as any thing beyond a better sort of under person, slaving for fashion, and largely rewarded for his services by admission to her assemblies and her box at the opera.

Thus ended Marcus Barry's first season in London. When town was empty, he got the usual proportion of leave, and flew with redoubled eagerness after his *Circe;* pursuing her wherever she went, to watering-place or villa; and when he had not invitations to the same houses, always finding the excuse of races, or a county ball, or some other such public cause of idler-gathering, by way of pre-

text for establishing himself and suite at the nearest hotel.

In this way Mr. Barry certainly became tolerably well acquainted with several persons of the highest distinction; but he also contrived to get through such alarming sums of money, that he was now no longer able to face the sure after-vexation of drawing upon his father for hundreds beyond his allowance: he, therefore, fell naturally into the common unprincipled course of leaving debts unpaid, and employing ready money for the payment of ready-money pleasures. Matters then seemed to go their usual course; and by that opiate was the young man lulled again into fatal security.

In his letters home, he described his life as one round of delight and distinction. Lady Donnington, the divine Lady Donnington, was still the goddess of his avowed idolatry; but he was not so complete an idiot as to proclaim what the nature and hopes of such worship *had* been and had ceased to be.

Having parents to deal with quite as

vain and jealous as himself, he did not find it a very difficult task to undeceive them as to their hope of his obtaining military promotion through Lady Donnington's means. He detailed to them the other impossibility of retaining equality of place or consideration with those he now lived familiarly with, were he to ask or seem to expect interest should be made for him by her. He assured them also that he had taken infinite pains to discover whether it were at all admissible to ask such favours of Lady Donnington; and the result was, that her Ladyship made it a point not to put herself in the way of being vexed at not succeeding for hundreds, by never applying to her powerful kinsman for a single individual.

This affectation of, at best, a selfish sensibility; this miserable covering of a dead heart, was lauded by Mr. Barry's pen; we must do him the justice to say, not internally by his conscience: but he hastened to efface the impression from his own mind, by recapitulating the number of invitations to select parties,

and of successive sets at Almack's, for which he was indebted to Lady Donnington's friendship; and by describing in glowing colours the favour he enjoyed from every Lady Jane and Lady Gertrude, whose names he knew were synonymous at Castle Barry with the supreme of rank, beauty, and fashion. After every letter Mrs. Barry became more and more convinced that her son had only to fix upon whatever fair prize he chose to draw from the lottery of marriage, and that his own attractions, aided by his popularity, would at once insure it to him. She more than once hinted her wish that he would make this selection soon, as the Colonel began to be seriously annoyed about money: for, if Marcus married a great fortune, he might go on for a year or two without requiring an income from the estates; so that when Alicia was to be brought out, they would have sufficient to render her *entrée* a proper one, and yet leave the West India property time to recover itself.

To these hints, Mrs. Barry generally

added most particular inquiries about Lady Donnington's probable kind intentions towards his sister; giving elaborate details of her increasing charms and accomplishments, in order that he might repeat them to her expected patroness. This, however, Marcus never did. Amongst the many disappointing occurrences which happen to young persons in the first stage of youth, is often the painful surprise of finding, that, however interesting to themselves, they must not begin speaking of any friend or connection, unknown to, or uncared for by their idol at the time. Such checks would show them that they themselves excite no real sentiment of regard; were not the self-love of the vain, or the excessive faith of the romantic, ever at hand to blind the eyes of common sense.

True to this axiom, Mr. Barry had early discovered, without being shocked by it, that it would be "*mauvais ton*" in him to prose about father, mother, or sister, amongst persons to whom they were unknown; that unless he could

say, the Duke or the Duchess, or Lord or Lady so and so, when speaking of his parents, it was better to follow the fashion of other young men in his circumstances, and leave it doubtful whether he had or ever had had parents.

As his own high Irish acquaintance did not know Colonel and Mrs. Barry, their names never occurred amongst them; and as Lady Donnington seemed not only to have forgotten the expectant pair, but their beautiful daughter also, he was driven to the miserable subterfuge of implying messages in his letters which his *adorable divinity* never sent. In this way he quoted several morsels of pithy counsel concerning the education of Alicia Barry's person, which he gathered from Lady Donnington's random remarks upon the defects of other "new young ladies," giving them as direct advice to his mother. Thus did he show how easily mere nursery morality gives way before the lesser and larger passions which are awakened in us by the world; to grapple with which, there is but one

principle of sufficient grasp for all—sound religious principle.

Lady Donnington's second season in London (after Mr. Barry's settlement there) began much later than her last. She had paid numberless visits towards the close of the year, entertained a large party at her house in the country, talked of travelling on the continent,—nay, did cross over to Paris for a celebrated actor's last performance, and kept all London in a fright, lest there would be no Donnington House that year. At length she re-appeared, just as Easter ended. The whole town was in danger of an order for illumination. Maugre his military superiors, Mr. Barry had succeeded in getting all his guards taken for him by a good-natured brother officer, and went to Paris. Half a dozen idle young men had followed Lady Donnington as well as he. They went because they had nothing else to do, and because Lady Donnington made every thing pleasant, and because it was the fashion to go after her; besides which, Lady Donnington had two nieces

with her, with fortunes at their own disposal.

These two Ladies Mostyn were co-heiresses to a large property inherited from their mother. The eldest was already of age, and rather pretty; the youngest, ill-looking and sickly. The first, of course, had professed admirers, none of whom she seemed to favour; there were two opinions, therefore, about her character. Some said she was waiting for her sister's death, to get the whole 6000*l.* a year, and to be entitled to expect a decidedly great marriage; others accused her of being sentimental, and laying herself out to marry for love. Mrs. Barry was instantly of the last opinion from the moment she heard that Lady Sarah Mostyn was of her aunt's party to Paris, and that Marcus was continually with them.

Nothing can exceed the presumption of ignorance; and ignorant Mrs. Barry was, not only of fully-employed life, but of that differently-active one which held, in her estimation, the highest rank in the

scale of excellence. We have before hinted that Colonel and Mrs. Barry lived habitually in the second set, when in Dublin, mixing with the first only in large evening parties, or at one or two great houses in the country. Mrs. Barry, consequently, knew little of the obstacles which start up between a handsome speculator of either sex, unsupported by family, and the object of their scheming. She made herself so sure of her son's success in such a speculation, that her husband actually involved himself to continue supplying his repeated demands for money; ever afraid that his own consequence would suffer if he allowed his heir to be embarrassed. Thus, by their almost preventing his requests, while abroad, these foolish parents entirely banished from his mind that wholesome consideration of the future, which is, perhaps, one secret of poorer men's frequent moral superiority over the children of fortune. Mrs. Barry was enchanted when she heard, through some secondary medium, that her son's manners were

"finer than ever" since he had been upon the continent.

The young Guardsman's first visit to Paris did, however, something more for him than give him an additional grace of manner; it taught him the fatal secret of patching up ruined affairs by the chances of the gaming-table. Having no natural taste for such amusement, when in London he had been able to resist every invitation of the sort; but in Paris the seductive influence of female persuasion, and the fashion which there followed a young man's admission into one great house, where high play was carried on by persons of rank, were irresistible. He played and won; and staying too short a time to lose afterwards, returned to England elated with the acquisition of some extra hundreds.

After this trip to the French capital, Mr. Barry recommenced in London with more money and more consideration; he had the *entrée* of more distinguished houses; he could hazard asking certain young ladies to dance with him at Almack's,

whom, the season before, he might not even have presumed to approach until they had honoured him with some notice: he was oftener called Barry by young men of decided fashion, and he could perceive that he was beginning to be supposed a *partie*, by mothers who had unmarried daughters to dispose of, nay, by young ladies themselves, who had been out a season or two. Lady Sarah Mostyn, he was quite sure, was growing more than partial to him.

Elated with present vanity, and past success at cards, he now launched forth into new expenses; and, it may be feared, yielded to vices hitherto unknown: but gaming had not yet become habitual with him, simply from the bondage to which he had bound himself to Lady Donnington, from whose society he must in a degree have exiled himself, had he frequented clubs and single men's dinners.

But as his style of living increased in extravagance, his father's letters began to assume a more serious aspect of remonstrance and representation; stating his own

pecuniary difficulties, and assuring him, that he must either look about in good earnest for a rich wife, or draw in to a mortifying degree.

The Colonel represented his own necessity of living like a gentleman, which, in fact, was keeping open house to the most inconsiderate squanderers of other people's properties; he enumerated his debts to tradesmen, bonds and bills, for which he should have no provision, unless a speculation, into which his agent had entered for him, should turn out fortunate; and he concluded by saying, that as he could not abate one atom of his ordinary style at Castle Barry, his son must retrench in London, or find an equivalent in some agreeable heiress. Mr. Barry had been too long suffered to go at large in his expenses and inclinations for any parental advice to speak with the voice of authority; he threw aside his father's letters whenever they came, satisfied that they were "exactly like what every fellow of fifty writes on the subject of money:" no farther moved too by his mother's

suggestions about Lady Sarah Mostyn, than as they ministered to his already over-weening vanity. One letter unattended to, another and another followed; the young man still going on in the same career of foolish prodigality, merely to keep up the character he had somehow attained, of being extremely rich. As if to drain his weak parents of credit as well as money, the London second season (as the end of summer is called) was prolonged to the very end of August. Long ere it ended, Marcus Barry was no longer cool enough to see, that, if his father's details were true, ruin was inevitable. He had made the mortifying discovery, that Lady Donnington uniformly excluded him from the only parties he would now care an atom for belonging to; he found out, that she gave regular suppers every Saturday, after the Opera, to about half a dozen chosen persons, amongst whom he had never been invited, from the Haymarket; nay, had the double mortification of showing himself surprised when told such suppers had been, and were. His malicious

informant took care to point the meaning of the exclusion, which amounted, in fact, to a public protest, that Lady Donnington did not consider the devoted Mr. Barry as one of her friends.

Our Guardsman could scarcely support the humiliation of this discovery; and had it happened when he was only a foolish vain boy, fancying himself in love, it must have crushed him: but now that he had steeped his lips in the cup of vicious indulgences, and felt secure of some fashion, he retained sufficient presence of mind to treat the matter as a thing perfectly indifferent to him on the score of pleasure; nay, rather as "a bore avoided;" insinuating, too, that Lady Donnington could never be too much praised for taking such good care of her pretty niece.

After this dexterous hint of an understanding between himself and Lady Sarah Mostyn, Mr. Barry considered himself what he called "committed to make love to her;" thus, what neither parental expostulations, nor grateful feelings, nor

mercenary considerations could effect, was done at one stroke by wounded vanity.

Neither admiring Lady Sarah's person nor manners particularly, nor as yet eager for her fortune; without one thought in trying to obtain her hand, beyond showing that it was his importance, not his unimportance, which caused his exclusion from Lady Donnington's suppers, Marcus Barry immediately commenced a steady, though covert, attack upon the young lady's affections. He had begu it, however, too late for complete success that season: the two Ladies Mostyn left London with their father for a northern tour, and did not revisit town till the Earl came thither to attend his duty in the House of Peers the ensuing February.

Then, however, Mr. Barry had many opportunities of carrying on the siege. Lord Harlech having a second wife and a second family, his daughters of a first marriage were often thrown upon their aunt's good nature to carry them

about. Marcus Barry, as one of her unfailing bond-slaves, was thus privileged to offer his arm to the Ladies Mostyn in a crowd, or to ask the honour of their hand in a quadrille at Almack's. He was never idle upon these occasions in his determined duty of complimenting the eldest; but Lady Sarah had such a provoking manner between simpleness and slyness, such a strange smothered laugh when looking most down, that he would not have known what to make of it, had it not been for her invariable practice of regularly taking his arm, and showing herself the most attentive to his attentions, whenever her father was in company. Now Lady Sarah was not dependent upon her father for fortune; and this proceeding seemed to say she knew it, and knew also that she was of age.

Having finally made up his mind to marry Lady Donnington's niece, simply because Lady Donnington had not chosen to stamp him as one of her *élite*, Marcus Barry formally announced his intention

and his encouragement, in the form of a sentimental confession to his mother, who, like many other nondescript characters, highly relished a jargon of sentiment, while opposed to all its principles. To his father he employed graver arguments; stating the substantial advantages of such a connexion, and the propriety of his making an appearance which might justify the young lady to the world, if, after going through the form of asking Lord Harlech's consent, she should be forced to marry him without it.

As the heir of 4000*l.* a year, he certainly considered himself fully qualified to propose for an heiress of 3000*l.*; but as he meant, after his marriage, not to look to his father for more than his present allowance, until the family estates were running smoothly again, he said he relied upon his father's justice for assisting him at the present juncture, either with money or credit, to a sufficient amount. In short, Mr. Marcus Barry found it was the fashion just then for young men to

have houses of their own, and give little parties now and then to friends of both sexes: Lord Lewis River's French Proverbs were already patronised by one or two married women of rank and character; Mr. Barry, therefore, burnt with a desire of rivalling him in a house and an attraction. His father was called upon to be answerable for the rent and furniture of a small elegant house in Park-lane, something, in size and verandas, like a cage for canaries. To this he consented; and in less than a month from that time his son was established in it with the proper complement of servants, French wines, richly-bound Souvenirs, Quarterly Reviews, and popular novels.

Upon this stock Mr. Barry set up for an exceedingly fine gentleman, and began his new career in the highest state of self-complacency. He believed (and he was not wrong) that Lady Sarah Mostyn's near relations had a constantly watchful and anxious eye upon her, especially when he was conversing with her. Lady Donnington alone showed no disposition

to notice, therefore none to disturb, their growing intimacy. She received him with her usual negligent favour; consequently, her exclusion of him from her late suppers could only have been done from unavoidable compliance with the wish of her brother: her individual opinion was obviously on his side. Nothing more was necessary to enlist Mr. Barry, with greater devotion than ever, in the ranks of her Ladyship. At her mention of the French play, and avowal that she was much too poor that year to rent the private box opposite Lord ——'s, our wrong-headed hero instantly flew to possess himself of it, and to place the disposal of the tickets invariably at her command. Her Ladyship was so charmed with the gallantry of the act (and he flattered himself with the grace of manner accompanying it), that he hazarded another throw for distinction, and was winner.

The most insolent and enrapturing of Italian singers having quarrelled with every musical director in London, was going back to Italy, determined never to

sing to an English audience again: he had, however, consented to sing one night for Mr. Barry and *his* particular friends, (at what price we will not inquire); and Lady Donnington, delighted to seize every contested pleasure, readily promised to go for an hour, in her way to another party, naming her immediate companions, and unceremoniously fixing who she was to meet.

The preparations for this select entertainment were expensive in proportion to the brevity of the time allotted for making them; but to expense Mr. Barry was growing indifferent. He chose to believe that the West India property was only failing for a year or two, and must recover itself; and as to what his father wrote, of having the bonds to redeem of large sums borrowed for his own use previous to his son's demands, he refused to credit their existence; judging, sanely enough, when self was not immediately concerned, that no man of common sense would have gone on living as Colonel Barry did, if aware that his income was

actually diminishing every year, and that he had enormous bills to answer at a given period.

As, however, no opinion of the son's could alter the circumstances of the father, Mr. Barry's remittances were often so tardy in their appearance, that he was driven to turn a favourite amusement to profit. He had recourse to the lottery of billiards. Whenever he was upon guard, and often when not so, he consumed nearly all the day at a billiard-house in St. James's Street. There, winning or losing, he was equally bartering character and self-respect for temporary gratification, either of hope or success. Living on the fruits of gambling can never be better in the eyes of a man of honour than living upon the results of highway robbery: what, then, must it be to the thoughts of such as have a holier and higher principle to guide them? It must be confessed that Mr. Barry had already ceased to ask himself what any action issued in, so that it only ministered to his present humour or present necessities;

and he did not take alarm at this growing habit, until he found that he had grown to bet upon other men's games, and, venturing so, to lose considerably.

He was lamentably deficient of every thing except credit, when he ordered the various elegancies of decoration and refreshment for his chosen party.

The important evening came; *Warbellino* was in his best voice and most gracious mood: Mr. Barry's little velvet-carpeted saloon, with all its pretty knick-knackeries, was pronounced an absolute *bijou*; and if the master of the revels had only appeared utterly careless about every thing, in short, comported himself simply as one of the company, the party would have gone off to admiration. But although Mr. Barry affected the most praiseworthy indifference to what had cost him days of incessant thought and pains, and after-pains; although he went on muttering smothered flatteries to Lady Donnington over a fan he was pretending to find fault with, that he might bring forward another of his own exquisite

fancy; though he did this, when some catastrophe happened to a whole pile of emblem confitures, which had been manufactured at Paris expressly for him, his unmastered complexion betrayed emotion; and Lady Donnington brought down thunders of applause the very next evening, by imitating to Lord Lewis Rivers "poor Mr. Barry's fuss of face!"

As Mr. Barry expected, Lady Donnington did not bring the Ladies Mostyn with her. He was far from suspecting that she did not consider a single man's parties quite correct for *her* nieces, although she brought two or three other young ladies whose mothers were less nice than she. Amongst them was the last brought out daughter of a widowed marchioness of more blood than fortune; the young lady was young enough to bear the title of pretty, and ready enough to receive attentions from a handsome Guardsman, evidently rich to boot. Seated by this new acquaintance, Mr. Barry swelled with the proud belief of making Lady Donnington sensible that he might have more

hearts at command than that of Lady Sarah Mostyn, if he chose to exert his powers of pleasing.

When it is said, that Lady Georgiana Carey's manner was most particularly flattering to the persons she chose to please, and most peculiarly repulsive to those she chose to distance;—when it is added, that until this evening she had looked at Mr. Barry with haughty disregard, nay, had once declined dancing in a quadrille because "she did not know all the people," and he was the only one she did not know;—when this is stated, no one will wonder that the vainest of irascible young men should at once have his head turned, and feel for the time unsettled in his purpose of making serious love to the eldest Lady Mostyn.

It was so gratifying to see Lady Georgiana Carey notice nobody but him! she, that must hitherto have been dragooned into treating him arrogantly; or perhaps she had been piqued by his not taking pains to get presented to her! While revolving such ideas, the face he

had once thought cross and coarse, grew pretty and pleasant in his eyes; and had it not been a notorious fact that "none of the Lady Careys had twopence," he would have made no hesitation in abandoning the Earl's daughter for that of the Marquis.

The next night he danced with Lady Georgiana at Almack's, and sat out two quadrilles with her: happier still! was presented by her to the Marchioness, and by the Marchioness to her youngest son. These personages, being allied to nearly all the nobility of the three kingdoms, were such grand additions to Mr. Barry's list of friends, that he now believed himself for ever enrolled on the calendar of the *haut ton*. He had not, however, any farther aim than such advancement of reputation in his attentions to them. When Lady Sarah Mostyn appeared, he succeeded, as he hoped, in making her understand that when he was sought by others, *she* alone was sought by him; and as she looked aside, and seemed conscious, and did not go away, he was war-

ranted in concluding, that a more explicit declaration, at a proper period, would be received with due thankfulness.

In such exaltation of vanity and conceit, with an immediate prospect of becoming master of a fair hand and a large fortune, he was led to exclaim, "Is the fellow mad?" when, on returning home, he opened a letter lying on his table, and read it by snatches to the end.

This ill-received epistle came from his former colonel, General Granby, to whom he was god-son, and had been aid-de-camp; it was written in the spirit of true kindness, briefly stating what the writer heard of the young man's unbounded expenses, and what he knew of his father's difficulties: and, while it clearly pointed out the ruin and disgrace which must speedily follow, unless prompt measures were taken to prevent such a consummation, it contained a last offer for Marcus's consideration. The General was unexpectedly appointed to one of the first military commands in the East Indies; he was then at Falmouth for em-

barkation, with his staff; if Mr. Barry would give up the Guards, and transfer himself to a regiment coming over by the next ships, General Granby undertook to push him on in his profession, and, according as his conduct merited it, give him the best military situations in his power to bestow upon one of his standing in the army; in short, General Granby undertook to make him a soldier; and that, every one who knew General Granby could not doubt, meant also to make him a fortunate one.

Gratitude is generally in proportion to knowledge. Mr. Barry could not be grateful for this offered benefit, because he did not see his want of it; he laughed at the poor old gentleman's stupid notions; owned him to be good-natured, however; and quietly lighted a cigar with his letter.

The ensuing evening he was invited home from a benefit opera by Lady Donnington to one of her suppers, where he sat next Lady Sarah Mostyn, and prevailed upon her to sing a French song.

He was that night at the very high tide of his fortune, and left Donnington House determined to seize the first moment of ten minutes' private conversation with Lady Sarah, to declare himself her lover, and press for an immediate marriage.

Mr. Barry's fate now hurried on. The next night he was engaged to a ball, and having nothing better to do after dinner, lounged into one of the winter theatres, where he had the *entrée* of a private box, close to one belonging to royalty. As he threw himself along a sofa there, he could hear that the next box had occupants; a mother and daughter, whose insipid remarks upon a farcical comedy for a few minutes failed to rouse him from that lethargic attitude of body, rather than of mind, with which he was stretching himself: a third joined them, and at her name he was all ear.

"So, you *are* come, my dear Lady Donnington!" ejaculated one of these ladies, with a voice more like the angry report of a pistol than a salutation of friendship; "how very good of you! I

thought I must have gone out of town without one quiet meeting—a week, however, is so short!—and I am dying to ask you all about that Mr. Barry, that Julia Georgiana Carey danced with the other night. They tell me he is a prodigious fortune; that all the West Indies belongs to him; and that he gave a French play to her the other night at his own house; and that you introduce him. Pray do tell me, if you can, that there is not a word of truth in this. I have such a horrible hatred to the Marchioness and all her brood—though the girls are my husband's nieces, — thank Heaven, we never speak!"

Lady Donnington prefaced her reply by a careless request that "dear Lady Charles would just let her hear that absurd Mr. Liston for one moment."

Lady Charles Everleigh having worked herself up into a complete passion, could not remain silent; and she went on exhaling her rancour in violent expressions.

"No; I never have forgiven that horrid woman for her positive murder of my

Harriet. All the world were going mad about my girl's heavenly skin, when that vile creature wheedled me into letting her go with them to Brandon; and there she fed her upon chocolate and filthy pies, till she made her one lump of black bile. I screamed for an hour after Harriet came back. You know she never has got the better of it. Yes, filthy pies, Lady Donnington, so don't put on such a qualifying face; for my maid got the secret out of the housekeeper at Brandon — every pie at the table (as long as my girl stayed, of course,) was regularly made of lard."

"Lard! what's lard?" asked Lady Donnington, with a tone irresistibly comic.

"O! some poisonous mixture to imitate butter, made out of hogs," was the reply. "I had some brought to me directly, and the very sight of it gave me a fit of illness. You heard the cruel joke somebody put about, afterwards?"

Lady Donnington professed ignorance, though she had made the joke herself.

"They said, the Marchioness mistook her for a calf, and meant to get the prize for her at Lord Haygarth's cattle-show. I am sure my girl never thought of Lord Haygarth, though he was paying her such decided attention before this shameful business; and I'm sure her malicious aunt thought of any thing except helping her to settle well."

"O how literal!" exclaimed Lady Donnington, falling into successive fits of laughter, during which her vexed companion persisted in pathetic entreaties that she would only tell her who Mr. Barry belonged to, and what his fortune really was?

Lady Donnington, who was all that time enjoying, by her quick imagination, the picture of a little starved *gourmand* living at free quarters for two months in a house where profuse eating was the order of the day, was some moments before she could articulate without being suffocated: at length she managed to say,—

"In the first place, I can only tell

you, that Mr. Barry is one of those young men, (fathers and mothers unknown!) who come from you know not where, and disappear, after a season or two, you know not how; that are taken up you scarcely know why, and left where you found them, whenever it suits you. However, I protest he is the civilest, most obliging person possible; and, considering that he is growing rather popular, is really not at all huffy or forward."

"But where did you pick him up?" was the repeated question.

"Somewhere in Ireland," returned Lady Donnington, negligently: "after that, he left his card in London *for years, all the next season,* before I remembered him; the moment I did, I could not be so ill-natured as not ask him to my house. And so it seems he has become a great man; and young ladies are falling in love either with himself or his money. How much too amusing!"

"Then he *is* rich!" interrupted Lady Charles Everleigh, in a voice of perfect despair.

"My dear Lady Charles, don't put yourself in a state!" exclaimed Lady Donnington: "Miss Everleigh looks quite aghast. I have not the least doubt that Mr. Barry is as poor as possible, and horribly in debt, if that will make you happy; for he regularly pays for every body, every where; and his father's place in Ireland is a miserable sort of half-bog half-mud fine house. Unless his father is a miser, the son must be living quite beyond all calculation of folly."

"I am so glad!" ejaculated Lady Charles Everleigh. "This is quite a relief! quite a cordial! I should be so vexed if another of those girls married a fortune: and they are all so well taught, so like their artful, good-for-nothing mother, that they are sure to catch any one they spread their nets for. I know they think he is immensely rich; for Julia Georgiana said so herself to her great friend Miss Ailsford; and Miss Ailsford let it out to my son, in one of their flirtations last night. They have set Lord George to get at the truth, by writing to somebody in

Ireland; and the best of it is, particularly desired him not to tell you, because they fancy you intend him for one of the Lady Mostyns; and that you took Lady Sarah over to Paris, on purpose that she might fall in love with him; because she, we know ——"

Here Lady Donnington's real or well-acted peals of laughter, at what she called "delightful absurdity!" so completely baffled Lady Charles Everleigh's efforts to finish her remarks upon Lady Sarah Mostyn, that the listener in the next box was hopeless of catching them: meanwhile, he endured the agonies of the rack and screw in one, though he kept perfectly still, that his neighbourhood might continue unsuspected.

Only three years before, Marcus Barry would have fired at the imagined degradation of thus filching gainful information; now that he was degraded by a career of fostered selfishness and of wilful expediency, he had lost the standard of right and wrong in his mind.

During Lady Donnington's laughing fit, Lady Charles Everleigh, who was any thing but a lamb, began to feel impatience rising fast into anger: she besought her Ladyship to say what entertained her so much; repeating, "How very tiresome, my dear Lady Donnington! how very tiresome! Caroline, don't keep staring so!"

"O! this *dessous des cartes* is so very amusing!" exclaimed Lady Donnington: "I have the whole scheme of their little politics before me! I am so much obliged to you for this! it never entered my poor unplotting head, when Lord George teased me, to ask poor Barry (imitating Lord George's voice) to sup after the opera. I thought it so good-natured of Lord George; for I never should have dreamt of such an invitation. O! it is much too entertaining, my simplicity! How Miss Everleigh enjoys it! I see she is quite worthy of it! Isn't that the Marchioness in the stage-box? She sees us! she unfurls her hand; so exactly like an umbrella! don't you *hear* her kiss it? How

she yawns, fancying herself smiling! poor woman! and we abusing her!"

Lady Donnington was obliged to draw back behind the curtain of their box, to conceal the amusement this honourable conviction excited in her. Marcus Barry, as unwilling as herself to be noticed, kept close where he was, proudly determining to have his revenge for the galling terms in which his former goddess had spoken of him, by joining the Duchess, and staying to hand Lady Georgina to her carriage, after he should have shown, by bowing to Lady Donnington, that he knew she was in the theatre.

Self-love made him incredulous of Lady Charles Everleigh's accusations against her own relations: he remembered the careless, good-humoured way with which Lord George Carey had joined him in the street one day, and walked with him to Tattersall's, previous to the supper-party. If his Lordship *had* suggested the invitation to Lady Donnington, that only proved his own wish for Mr. Barry's society; and if he were going to inquire

into Mr. Barry's fortune, that, too, was fair enough in a brother; and besides testifying that Lady Georgina was positively captivated, the whole set of circumstances went to prove, that her family would gladly accept the proposal he never meant to make. As matters stood, our guardsman merely received and used this conviction as a balm to wounded conceit.

For some time the party in the next box were so occupied by a scene on the stage, that conversation paused. When the act ended, Lady Donnington, evidently enjoying ill-natured gossip, turned upon her fretting companion, with the exclamation of "But what's become of Sir Philip Baverstock? we forget him!"

"O! didn't you know?" interposed Miss Everleigh, exultingly: "he never came forward, after all.—Poor Georgina! I was so sorry!"

"My dear, don't pity her: she is used to it," was Lady Donnington's exquisitely feeling observation, accompanied

by an engaging smile, as she uttered the last biting sarcasm.

"Yes, indeed!" resumed Lady Charles Everleigh, "Sir Philip is gone off to Edinburgh with the Monteiths; so Julia Georgina is in a double hurry to get a husband, before he marries one of those pattern misses: how one dislikes pattern misses! that never do any thing like any body else, and would not flirt for the world, nor waltz with any man but their brother! Such affectation! I hope the Careys will play their cards better with this Mr. Barry than they did with Mr. Benyon; for if *he* slips too, after they get him pushed on amongst people, who never heard of his existence till this year, Julia Georgina will be fairly ruined."

"I half forget about Mr. Benyon," said Lady Donnington, carelessly: "where did he spring up? Do tell me something about him."

"O, you know he began a positive nobody," replied Lady Charles; "but he has been getting on in society these last four seasons, from his immense riches and his

cunning. He began affecting to be exceeding fine: he was always with Harry Ossory (only because they happened to meet abroad, and travel together). Harry, of course, expected Mr. Benyon would propose for his sister; and as the Ossorys are so horribly poor, it was worth their while to get him invited every where they could, that their girl might not be said to marry a person out of the dirt."

"How well you understand these things, my dear Lady Charles!" was Lady Donnington's ironical exclamation.

Lady Charles Everleigh went, unheeding, on. "Then he slid away without proposing, and got into the Sainsborough set, who were glad enough to catch him, and took them in in the same way; and after them, the Humes; and so he has gone on till he has got every where. He is so sly, that he never commits himself to any of the girls, though every one of them make themselves quite sure at the time. Mrs. St. Leonard showed the trick up to me not a month ago. She said nobody would have admitted him into their

house after his behaviour to poor Bess Ossory, if it had not been for his 8000*l.* a year. Julia Georgina was trying for him when she and her mother poisoned my poor Harriet."

"Then, of course, he was professing to admire Miss Everleigh!" observed Lady Donnington, with an expression of face which showed her mistress of some little private anecdotes which it did not suit Lady Charles Everleigh to have remembered. She reddened as she replied, "My Harriet never was taken in by him, nor would she have had him, if even he had been serious. As for Julia Georgina, she is absolutely ruined. Nothing destroys a girl's prospects so completely as letting a match go off with a person of that sort: none of her own set will ever propose to her afterwards: it is quite mortifying enough for girls to be obliged to *marry* rich *parvenus*: however, then, they *have* something for their sacrifice: quantities of money, you know, Lady Donnington —"

"O don't address that to me, my dear

Lady Charles," interrupted Lady Donnington; "it quite and entirely belongs to your daughter there."

"I beg, Lady Donnington," interposed Miss Caroline Everleigh, looking back from a front seat, "that you won't bring me in about anything except a flirtation. I can't bear the idea of settling! I make no secret of being horridly fond of mere flirting; it is so amusing: the men know I never expect a proposal: it is so much pleasanter to be good natured, than mum and mousey like Amelia Manningham, or catching at every civil word, as Miss Wardour does."

Lady Donnington, without further regarding her than by a look, which seemed to say, "O, that is your style of entrapping!" composedly directing her eye-glass across the house, addressed Lady Charles.

"Pray, look at the Marchioness's box, one, two, three new men! Don't let them see me: — we don't want them here: that's Colonel Kelly bowing! — There's William Darnley's great moonshine teeth!

Look at the Marchioness, courteseying down her poor dwarfs like a huge hen smothering a brood of *Avidivats!* Don't you hear her lisp —*How de do, Colonel!— How de do, William!— How de do, Lord John!* Now she is saying her everlasting good thing about her Refuge for the Destitute: that did well enough to the Duke of Chiswick, but it has no piquance to younger brothers, as poor as rats. There! I see my creatures putting their heads into her box: they are quite right to get in any where; for I turned them loose on the common, because you wrote me word you had something so particular to speak about."

While Lady Charles Everleigh was questioning, and Lady Donnington saying who her gallant lords in waiting were, Marcus Barry had time to feel how little he relished satirical pleasantry, when exercised upon himself, or in such a way as to reflect upon himself. On the present occasion, he thought Lady Donnington the very essence of mere malice; and fed the fierce hunger of his rising resentment with the resolution of revenging himself upon her

after he should have secured her niece, by never again hearing a jest or sally of hers without obvious scorn or apathy. He was, however, quite sickened from his purpose of going over to the Carey family: there, too, he could not help seeing he was a dupe. In the midst of these thoughts, he heard Lady Donnington say she must go away; that she must beckon one of her escorts to come and see her to her carriage. Having no mind to encounter her just then, he remained still.

"How tiresome of you not to stay the play out!" exclaimed Lady Charles Everleigh. "But do tell me, if I hear it said you are going to marry Lady Sarah Mostyn to this Mr. Barry, am I to contradict it?"

"My dear Lady Charles!" ejaculated the Countess, with provoking indifference, "did you ever hear of my having any thing to do with a marriage? I hate fuss more than any creature living: I never trouble myself to know what is going on in the way of love-making; so if either of my brother's daughters choose to marry Mr. Barry, or any other person of the

sort, I shall only think them excessively foolish. Do tell me what is happening on the stage, is it raining leaves? or do they mean it for a shower of rain?"

"Now don't look at the odious stage," resumed Lady Charles, pettishly: "do tell me about Lady Sarah, while Caroline looks."

"O yes, do look for us all, Miss Everleigh," exclaimed Lady Donnington, in a tone of sarcastic pleasantry; then adding, "Indeed, Lady Charles, I am not Princess Schehezerade; and I cannot go on telling a thousand and one tales. It is certainly very amusing to hear Mr. Barry quarrelled for by young ladies and their mammas: it is so exactly, to me, as if you were fighting for Rossini, or Sapio, or some such person. There, I hear my cavalier's heavy feet: I will only take him as far as my carriage, Miss Everleigh: he shall come back to you: you know I know you like flirting. O this horrid ball after Lady Chaloner's! Is not Caroline going home to dress? You take her yourself, of course?"

The entrance of Lady Donnington's lord in waiting prevented Miss Everleigh's pettish avowal of not being asked to the ball in question: her mother muttered something about meaning to go out of town too early the next day for a late ball at night; and in the midst of their confusion, the only person belonging to the set whose conversation was of consequence to Mr. Barry made good her retreat: he was, therefore, released from the self-imposed slavery of listening.

Having waited until he might be sure of not encountering his unmasked scorner by the way, he went noiselessly out of the box; and equally avoiding an encounter with Lady Georgina Carey, quitted the theatre, and hastened to his own house.

It is nearly impossible to give an accurate idea of the state of Mr. Barry's mind: one moment he was ready to throw every thing up, quit London and all its pleasures and all its people, without any explanation; at another, he felt stung into the resolution of going direct to Lady Donnington, and reproaching

her with her duplicity and ingratitude. It is astonishing how quickly we recover a sense of right, the instant wrong is perpetrated against ourselves! Mr. Barry now clearly saw, for the first time, that Lady Donnington, who had never been entertaining except when ill natured, was selfish, thankless, perfidious, and incapable of any attachment.

His self-love was cut to the quick, by the composure with which she had given him up to the disgrace of being a *parvenu:* that bitter quotation, of "fathers and mothers unknown," was never to be forgiven — and he had once been in love with Lady Donnington! For a moment he fancied the signal revenge of publicly affronting her by some unexpected impertinence on his part; an impertinence which must be the more wounding, because it would thus be inexplicable to her.

From this insanity, however, he was recovered by the certainty that Lady Donnington, turned into an enemy, would be dangerous, to positive destruction. Her

power or her sarcasms might at once deprive him of his expected triumph in marrying her niece. Till that conquest were achieved, therefore, he must cover rancour and resentment with the mask of former devotion.

Our young guardsman was assuredly making rapid advances in the world's school: learning lessons there, which would enable him to inflict the same mortifications, in his turn, upon others. Had his ill-governed character allowed him to make a single rational friend to whom he might have gone in his present paroxysm of irritation, it is possible that he might have heard some truths which would have opened his eyes to the unwarantable folly of expecting the honours of high birth to be gratuitously given to one without either distinguished talents or acquired station, and originally belonging to the second class of society. He might, therefore, have had the extreme edge of his resentment abated; but no such moderate friend had Mr. Barry made, much less one capable of asking him what there

was in the passing vapour of a fashionable reputation, which could recompense a being destined for eternity to spot his soul with hideous passions in its pursuit.

Fiercely resolving to make love to Lady Sarah Mostyn in good earnest, he rapidly altered his dress, threw himself into his cabriolet, and drove to the fancy ball. A certain degree of vexation generally improves the complexion, and lights up the eyes. We will not stop to inquire what sinister effect it may have upon the expression of a countenance. Suffice it, that upon the present occasion Mr. Barry's irritated feelings gave so spirited an air to his face and figure, that when he entered the ball-room, several ladies observed "how particularly handsome Mr. Barry looked as a guerilla chief!" He did not, however, approach any one of them, but lingered at the door-way, to talk, with studied carelessness, to Lord George Carey, of horses and yachts; of his father's "stupid great place in Ireland;" of their unwieldy West India estates, that were "good for nothing in

his estimation, because too far for shooting or hunting upon;" and to do this in a tone which completely satisfied Lord George that his companion was heir to an immense property, and very likely to make his sister an offer of marriage.

Mr. Barry enlarged more about his own expenses, his father's occasional lectures, and the absolute strength of their funds, because he saw the Lady Mostyns and Lord Harlech standing near enough to catch most of his affected complaints. What he aimed at, now, being to indemnify himself for the want of fashion, by securing a reputation for great wealth.

After this successful feat, he danced with all the Lady Careys successively; and Lady Sarah Mostyn, afterwards sitting out two quadrilles with him, every one began to think Lady Sarah was certainly going to marry Mr. Barry. One or two married ladies, who had honoured the young man with very particular notice of late, absolutely reproached him. Lady Donnington was infinitely amused

with the scene; for she saw nothing in it, except the game of one young lady trying to outwit another; and giving Mr. Barry credit for being almost a passive instrument in their hands, played on, through his own vanity, she never dreamt that he had the more egregious folly of believing himself yet of sufficient consequence to pique her by an intended difference in his conduct. So slight was the difference, and so habituated was Lady Donnington to make every body do just what she liked, that having no sentiment to render her sensitive, she went on, ordering Mr. Barry about as usual.

Mr. Barry was outwardly as much at her command as ever; yet he found means to insinuate to Lady Sarah Mostyn that he worshipped at Lady Donnington's shrine for the sake of another goddess. Lady Sarah blushed, and looked oddly pleased; or, perhaps, he mistook the appropriate actions upon such occasions for the blush of conscious approval. There are expert actresses off the stage as well as upon it, whose averted cheek

is sure to be coloured by the spectator's imagination. Lady Sarah, however, said nothing; but she sealed his hopes at once, by bravely looking up, when suddenly asked to dance by a notoriously-admired young Baronet, exclaiming, "Mr. Barry, am I not engaged to you?"

Mr. Barry could do no less than mutter some elegant folly, about this volunteered engagement, and lead the young lady to the dance. His exultation was complete, when he found her father was standing directly opposite to them at the moment of receiving her fair hand, and that his Lordship's countenance expressed satisfaction rather than alarm.

Till this instant Mr. Barry had only contemplated future acceptance from Lady Sarah, through her own free agency; but at the prospect of being as graciously received by her father, his eager thoughts took fire, and he imagined the glorious triumph of marrying Lady Donnington's niece from the house of Lord Harlech, as at once sealing his consequence, and constituting his revenge. However dipped,

his father's estates were rated at 4000*l.* a year; therefore he would be warranted in making a formal proposal even to the co-heiress of 7000*l.* As he meditated making what he called "the agreeable to the old peer" for a while, preparatory to a positive declaration, he now contented himself with observing the young lady's quantity of bracelets, "as if it were necessary to cover arms not exactly like Miss Catharine Gresley's!" then gallantly reproaching her for "regularly wearing a *ponceau* gown, for no other reason on earth than to show that no colour could make some skins look less than snow white!" Lady Sarah laughed and looked down, and persisted in saying nothing; but that was quite according to rule on such occasions of insipid love-making; so Marcus Barry was satisfied. The ball ended, and he returned home, intoxicated with vanity and self-confidence.

The next morning the whole town rung with the report that Lady Sarah Mostyn was gone off from the fancy-ball

with Sir Lionel Colliton; that very baronet whom she had evaded dancing with, by announcing herself as engaged to Mr. Barry. Every body saw the trick: Mr. Barry had been used as a blind to conceal from the watching eyes of friends and relations Lady Sarah's under-game of keeping up a disgraceful attachment which had been formed by her two years before in a distant county, with a man whose neglected, unprincipled wife afterwards eloped from him. Lord Harlech had taken great pains to stifle any report of his daughter's weak, nay criminal encouragement of Sir Lionel's attentions during that period; and did indeed prefer seeing Lady Sarah bestow her affections upon Mr. Barry (flimsy as he thought him), to beholding her the bride of a profligate spendthrift. But the law having just restored his liberty to Sir Lionel, Lady Sarah was gone off with him to Scotland, merely to spare herself continued "*scenes*" with the scrupulous members of her family.

Such was the morning intelligence des-

tined to greet Mr. Barry when he sallied forth the next *afternoon*, to leave his card at Lord Harlech's, in his way to the parks, where he expected to meet both the object of his first love and of his last. We will leave him sauntering towards his fate, if such we are to consider this unlooked-for event, and see what was passing, meanwhile, at his home in Ireland.

With Colonel and Mrs. Barry things had been going on much as usual, save that now and then certain panics seized them; and, for the time, a feeble effort was made at limiting their own expenses, and attempting to limit those of their son. Both were, however, careful to keep such humiliating alarms entirely to themselves: Alicia, therefore, did not even suspect that her brother's frequent demands for money were met with displeasure from any other cause than natural disapprobation of the young man's profuseness; and, in consequence, she sometimes ventured a little tender remonstrance in her letters to him.

Alicia loved her brother; or, rather,

would have loved him, had he permitted her. She recollected his boyish days with fond regret, when, in company with Jocelyn Hastings, he used to play with, or protect her; but since that period nothing endearing had been added to her stock of remembrances.

After launching upon the gay tides of Dublin, Marcus had been successively absorbed by the notion of being a man at sixteen; then, by a rage for notice; and, lastly, by devotion to Lady Donnington; every one of these stages was translatable into vanity and selfishness; and the seed such a nature sowed, it reaped. That warm affection which grew spontaneously in a sister's heart, wanting only common sunshine to ripen it, was withering under a disregard almost amounting to contempt.

Where no sympathies are met, no confidence given, no interest expressed, affection must decay. Alicia was chilled by her brother's evident deadness to family feelings; and hearing, through his more diffuse letters to his mother after

he went to London, how entirely his time was devoted to such pleasures as Mr. McManus had taught her to consider at best frivolous, she could not help contrasting his pursuits with what she heard of their early associate Jocelyn Hastings, and wishing, that, like Jocelyn, he had rather aimed his arrow at the heavens, than turned its point to the swallowing waters.

Although her former playmate had (at Mr. McManus's cautious suggestion) long ceased to accompany his epistolary messages by presents to her and Flora, Alicia had attributed the change, not to caprice but to a probable decay of interest in youthful friends at such a distance, and of small pretensions to continued recollection. Her disposition was too humble for captiousness or for jealousy: she could easily believe herself uncared for by persons she loved, therefore often wept her own supposed deficiency; but never did she feel the demon-pang of that jealousy which grounds its cause of suffering upon the worth or attractions of

another; consequently, when she thought of a decaying affection, grief worked in her for good, teaching her to search for the root of the evil in herself, and seeking so, to cast it out.

The more she heard of Jocelyn's intellectual acquirements, the less she wondered at his seeming indifference to one like herself; yet the more she felt stimulated to deserve some portion of his regard should they ever meet again. Thus she perpetually stole an hour or two from sleep every morning, before her time was claimed by Mrs. Brudenell, to study books given her with valuable comments by Mr. M'Manus; and by such studies the memory of Jocelyn Hastings was unconsciously kept up.

Five years after Jocelyn's departure for England, Alicia's veneration for his superiority of mind was increased by deep interest in his altered fate: she was ever disposed to see a halo round every head stricken by calamity; and when misfortune assailed him, it made her doubly anxious to bestow a fuller tribute to his

excellence. She had to pass through many more years before she could lay the practical lesson to heart, which the highest authority teaches, that calamity "happens to the evil as well as to the good," generally extracting more poison from the one, and more "precious ointment" from the other.

In the case of Jocelyn Hastings, however, neither her sympathy nor her admiration were misapplied. After distinguishing himself for genius and application at college, after carrying off its prime honours, and leaving it with a character for high self-command, which few young men with his facilities for wide indulgence could have maintained: he was just entering the world under his liberal uncle's eye, about the period of Marcus Barry's first London season, when the failure of a great mercantile speculation in which Mr. Grant had been induced to embark so much of his property, that nearly all of it was finally mulcted, at once burst the bubble of the young man's fortune, and deprived him of his pro-

tector: Mr. Grant died of apoplexy in consequence of the shock.

Jocelyn immediately determined to take orders, limiting his worldly views to the slender provision of the church, yet rejoicing that his heart went with his destiny; and that he could pour all the energies of his mind into that sacred profession. Within a year after his uncle's death, he was applied to by the father of a college acquaintance to undertake the office of accompanying his son abroad. The youth was in ill health, and, a sea voyage being recommended by the physicians, a passage was secured for him and his friendly companion in a frigate destined for the Mediterranean. As the frigate was not to sail for six weeks, and as Mr. McManus was then about to quit Ireland, Jocelyn had ample time for crossing over from England on a farewell visit to his old preceptor.

The visions of Jocelyn's boyhood were vanished with his fortune, but its affections were not; and, fearless of danger to the sanity of his present mind by

seeing Alicia Barry (too confidently reckoning upon his own strength), he did not hesitate to follow the impulse of his heart, and to hasten, after the first night spent at Mr. McManus's, in search of her and her family. The welcoming habit of the Irish makes breakfast visits things of common occurrence; and, of all meals, breakfast is the one which brings a person more immediately into the bosom of a domestic circle. When a boy, Jocelyn had received a general invitation of the kind from Colonel Barry, and had no hesitation, therefore, in availing himself of it now, to talk over old times, and speak of his new views.

He entered the domain of the Colonel, by the old lodge gate; making his way, as he thought, direct to the house; but great alterations had been made since his intimacy with the wild grounds of Castle Barry; and a drive sweeping here, and a walk diverging there, puzzled him so completely that he took a wrong path, and lost himself in a labyrinth of new shrubberies.

In this distress he wandered some time, rather impatient of delay, yet not unmindful of the lavish sweets which the mingling breaths of flowers and of the second hay harvest (for it was the middle of August) threw around him. He could not forbear pausing to drink in the sweet morning air, as his swelling heart followed the heaven-ward flight of the lark, soaring and singing above his head; every spray and leaf had its diamond pendants, and the ground, covered with the heavy dew bespeaking a hot day, shone like a sheet of crystal under the fully-risen sun.

As this was the hour of the servants' breakfast at Castle Barry, not a single gardener was at work; Jocelyn, therefore, did not meet any one to direct him in his wandering course. The first living object he beheld was Flora, whom he had left a little creature, running about with a mimic lamb instead of a doll. She was now as old as Alicia had been when he quitted Ireland, and tall of her age. He saw her at a distance, bounding over the high grass of a sunny field, where she had

been making hay, and which a low stile divided from the remote quarter where he was straying. Flora's hat was off, and a profusion of hair, like Alicia's, was floating about on the autumn wind.

This hair, an accidental glow of complexion, that indescribable air of family, which is invariably to be found even amongst persons decidedly plain and decidedly handsome of the same parents, made him forget the lapse of time; and springing forward with as eager a step as her own, he leaped over the stile, and caught the little girl in his arms.

Flora, who seeing a young man walking alone in their grounds, had mistaken him for her brother, answered his hasty caress by calling loudly upon her sister, and struggling to get away. At her voice, Alicia looked up from her employment of distributing bread, fruit, and milk to the haymakers at their breakfast: her head, like Flora's, was without other covering than her own glittering hair: neither cloak nor shawl concealed the graceful lines of her youthful figure, and

as she raised her face from the basket over which she was bending, she presented a vision of youth, beauty, and benevolence never to be forgotten.

Jocelyn looked at her with kindling delight and softening remembrances: the hours of childhood and boyhood; the day-dreams of the latter happy period; the kindness of Rose McManus, and the fatherly care of her father; the late promise of fortune, and now its crush; — all crowded upon his memory and upon his heart. His eyes moistened whilst he exclaimed in a penetrating tone: "Alicia! have you quite forgot Jocelyn Hastings?" Alicia was half on his neck the next instant. At first she did not recognize his appearance; but the voice she heard belonged to the dear past,—that past into which the image of Rose McManus was gone! and as if finding *her* again, she replied to his animated exclamation by a welcome of the liveliest joy.

Rapid questioning and explaining followed. Jocelyn described his bewilder-

ment among Colonel Barry's improvements; and laughed over his mistake of the sisters. Flora, with a soberized step and subdued colour, had now no resemblance to Alicia, whose complexion alone, varying through every lovely shade of roseate hue, would have distanced rivalry, even had her features been less perfect. When the trio turned back together, it was impossible for Jocelyn not to be riveted by the shining out and vanishing of these exquisite tints as Alicia spoke or listened. Such a complexion could only belong to a character of wide and delicate sensibility: and when this charm was heightened by a countenance of the softest contour and sweetest expression; by eyes that, in spite of their tearful confusion, sparkled like the diamond dews around them, she appeared too dangerous for a long survey. Jocelyn called home his truant thoughts and eyes; and as he released *her* hand, retaining that of Flora, expressed his wish of going directly in search of Colonel and Mrs. Barry.

Eager to have her artless transports

shared, Alicia ingenuously proclaimed the desire; and having neither bonnet nor shawl to seek when rambling about their own domain at so early an hour, she led the way by a short path to the house. Colonel and Mrs. Barry were not down stairs; but Flora flew up to tell them who was come; and by the time they joined their self-invited guest, Mrs. Barry had quite got over the disagreeable surprise of finding Alicia had been seen. "Stuff! my dear," had been the easy Colonel's exclamation, "the young man is in the church now, you know, with not a sixpence to bless himself with. Dismal enough I'll warrant! And if he were to think Ally an angel, will have no company of the sort our girl is to go amongst, to say it to. Come, let us be kind to the poor lad."

Nearly as simple as her husband (for surely two simpler worldlings never existed!) Mrs. Barry went into the morning room as satisfied as he was, that Mr. Hastings could not forestall the effect of her daughter's beauty, by circulating a

report of it in *the best society.* Of his own heart being captivated, either by the person or the lovelier character of Alicia, she never once dreamt. Mrs. Barry appeared to think that such nobility of beauty was to have its patent made out solely for the rich and great; therefore received Jocelyn with genuine good humour; and as the young man himself showed none of that humiliation or dejection which all parties had expected from him, conversation during breakfast became cheerful and agreeable.

After the first brief avowal of his own completely altered circumstances, accompanied by an agitated tribute to the memory and misfortune of his kind uncle, which it cost him an effort to recover from, he left saddening subjects for those of happier interest. He talked about Marcus, lamenting that they had not met when in England, and professing to know no more of his popular friend, Lady Donnington, than what common fame detailed. He spoke, too, of Rose McManus's marriage; and of his venerable preceptor's

purpose of joining her and her husband in Brazil, where the latter was now fixed for three more years in consequence of a new appointment. From the Atlantic he naturally turned the discourse to the Mediterranean, whither he was so soon to go himself.

Jocelyn was not yet solely merged in the interests of his chosen and honoured profession: the spirit within him was still to be stirred by the idea of treading the classic shores of Italy and Greece; and while he distinctly showed that loftier aspirations would accompany him to the rock of Patmos, than to the Parthenon of Athens, he could not forbear recurring to the objects of his boyish enthusiasm with a more than permitted portion of fire.

A purer morality and a clearer judgment had already disenchanted him of many unsound notions respecting that love of fame which the example of sages, legislators, and warriors had once taught him to consider as the noblest spring of action; but the names of those

ancient worthies, still came on him with the force of powerful music, rousing multitudes of generous associations, and dazzling him for a while, out of his ability to weigh their motives with their actions.

Alicia, who had been suffered to remain at breakfast, was all eye and ear while Jocelyn spoke; she listened to him as she would have done to her brother, if such had ever been the conversation of Marcus; and if she looked for and missed the peachy colouring and laughing look of boyhood, she was not long in discovering the deep interest of a face already strongly marked with thought and feeling; and over the silver paleness of which, emotion alone, threw successive tides of light rather than of colour.

As Jocelyn's themes varied, his countenance and manner partook of the variation. The changes of his cheek; his smiling, or quivering lip; his moistened, or diffusively-brightening eye; and the deep expressiveness of his voice, were all observed and admiringly felt by Alicia: but Colonel and Mrs. Barry having no

taste for intellectual or moral beauty, silently agreed, that Jocelyn Hastings was not grown in the least what they would call handsome. Their daughter, however, thought little of the perishable medium through which she fancied she saw the soul of Jocelyn: she had always been prepared to see her former playmate under a cloud of sadness; for though she knew nothing of poverty, except as she saw it amongst the ignorant poor around, her parents talked with such horror and lowering pity of "poor Hastings' miserable beggary," that although she felt loss of fortune could not lessen his value in her estimation, she believed dejection in himself, unavoidable; and with such dejection she was inclined to sympathize unscrutinizingly. Feelings so excited would have been brief, and after years would have taught her, that for one who had embraced a profession which demanded conscientious indifference to the distinctions of this world, with eager pressing on in a higher service, such dejection would have been apostacy. Now she saw,

and distinctly apprehended, that Jocelyn did not consider himself in the slightest degree shorn of his own proper claim upon regard and respect by the ruin of worldly prosperity; she heard from his own lips, that he voluntarily entered the service of the church,—that he was content with its lowest temporal wages,—that he neither sought patronage nor pecuniary help,—that he had that within, which armed him with strength to combat all the ills without.

There was something so heroic in this magnanimous self-respect, when grounded upon Christian principle, that as Jocelyn briefly, yet clearly, alluded to such a state of feeling, in answer to one of Colonel Barry's condolences, Alicia thought his spirit and his countenance, alike similar to his whose face, we are told, shone like the face of an angel when standing up to witness to the truth. It was an abiding impression, and no other's seal effaced it.

It was soon discovered that Jocelyn Hastings could only remain a month in Ireland; Colonel and Mrs. Barry were

what they called at home for the whole summer, a general invitation was therefore given him.

Mrs. Barry made the most of this short time; for she was soon left sole manager at Castle Barry, the Colonel being called to Dublin upon his money concerns, which indeed began now seriously to alarm and engage him.

Next to beauty, Mrs. Barry naturally ranked accomplishments as valuable for a young lady, brought up solely with a view to bringing out. Alicia's dancing was already perfection, her French and Italian accent she concluded perfect; but their governess could not teach Spanish, and Spanish was just then the fashion: that is, every young lady played the guitar, and sang Spanish songs. Now, if Spanish were as much the vogue a year hence, what would become of the youthful debutante, if she were unable to sing in that language?

Finding Jocelyn Hastings thoroughly acquainted with it, this anxious mother besought him to give her girl lessons, if

but sufficient to assist her in pronunciation. Alicia herself wished to acquire the language; and as she, with instinctive propriety, included her sister in the petition for instruction, Jocelyn could not refuse.

At first, Jocelyn saw no reason why he should refuse, since he was indeed purely solicitous to be of service to the higher powers of Alicia's mind; and he knew no better way than the one offered. Many opportunities would be thus afforded him, of discoursing with her upon matters of more import; and so teaching her where to seek armour for her gentle breast, when she should be called upon to expose herself in the conflict of life. He began therefore to give his two pupils lessons in Spanish.

As Mrs. Barry was occupied with visiting, or being visited, she could not make one in those dangerous meetings. Mrs. Brudenels, therefore, was installed in the chair of surveillance: but Mrs. Brudenell was not qualified to detect the subtle spirit of love, when too pure an essence to be embodied in passionate looks; and Jocelyn himself, while unconsciously meeting the

gratefully affectionate gaze of Alicia, with the eyes of her protecting angel, was long of suspecting that a selfish wish was mingling with his tenderness.

Protected from himself, as he vainly thought, by the presence of two comparatively indifferent objects, he was less watchful over his own heart than he ought to have been, whilst directing his alternately serious and animated discourse to the one most interesting; indeed, he rarely denied himself the pleasure of continuing excursive conversation or reading, long after the regular lessons were done; and the intreaty of Mrs. Barry, that he would catechise Flora, "because she was so wickedly fond of an old Catholic priest at Hillstoun," giving him a new pretext for self deception, he went on, feeding a virtuous, yet unwarranted love, ever fancying the offering laid solely upon the holiest of altars.

Hitherto Flora had repeated certain creeds without understanding them; and Alicia herself, having been left by Rose McManus in the rudiments of religious

knowledge, was so sensible to a bewilderment of ideas upon sacred subjects, that she frequently paused in the midst of other tasks to listen to Jocelyn Hastings. From the moment in which her wistful look denoted an awakened mind, warmth was added to light in his illustration of difficult doctrines, and he exerted himself to encourage her in frankly stating her doubts and objections, that he might with greater certainty satisfy her upon every important point; by this means, a character of confiding affection was given to their companionship, as dangerous as delightful.

Ere the month of Jocelyn's lease was expired, an unforeseen occurrence allowed him to prolong his stay. The invalid young man, whom he was to have accompanied in a cruize up the Mediterranean, suffered so severe a relapse of illness, that he was pronounced unfitted at present for the probable effects of a sea voyage; but being advised to winter at Madeira, he meant to attempt reaching it, after acquiring the needful degree of strength. Although

Mr. Hastings was still considered, kindly engaged to accompany him; the father of the youth permitted him to remain in Ireland, until the period of their joint voyage could be absolutely fixed; and as this option was offered to Jocelyn before he had the least suspicion of his danger from Alicia Barry, he made no scruple of accepting the permission to prolong his stay.

Assuredly, never were more tempting snares laid by the great Tempter for mortal integrity. Jocelyn Hastings was almost wooed by Mrs. Barry into perpetual association with her young daughters. If there were people staying in the house, as Alicia was not yet to be exhibited, and as her lessons must go on, and as bloom-bestowing exercise must be taken, and as Mr. Hastings could always be teaching something, even during exercise, this blind mother had no hesitation in committing her to his care, and that of Mrs. Brudenell. Thus Jocelyn not only came regularly every forenoon to the studying room, but as duly joined the evening

walks of the governess and her pupils: infusing, as he strolled with them through woods, and by waters, or met them at Mrs. Judy M'Manus's early tea table, the spirit of poetical taste; and, as a modern divine admirably expresses it, *couching the eye of the mind* to the beauties and bounties of creation.

An album being one of the indispensable outfits for a fine young lady, was at this juncture suggested to Mrs. Barry's thoughts. One, bound in blue and silver, with vellum leaves, was ordered, and sent down from Dublin for Mr. Hastings to illuminate after the fashion of an ancient missal; the ingenuity of its future contributors was, therefore, to be tasked, by finding, or writing verses, appropriate to one or other of the painted headpieces.

But though Jocelyn cheerfully undertook the task, laughingly declaring that he could only complete it in a twelvemonth, he persisted in calling it Mrs. Barry's album, that he might not accustom himself to take pleasure in working

for Alicia. The frontispiece of this choice volume was to be a portrait of the house at Castle Barry.

It was an ancient structure, though not built by the Colonel's immediate ancestors; and, seen by moonlight, with the long shadows of its turrets and its trees thrown forward upon the lake, (by the margin of which it stood,) was well worthy the exercise of a painter's talent.

The important business of settling points of view and effects of light; the suggestion of one, and the demurring of another; kept this drawing some time on hand: and as Mr. Hastings was known to draw with an artist's command of pencil, Alicia was exhorted to attend, and watch his mode of penning in and filling up a sketch, in case she should ever be visiting where sketching parties were the fashion.

Thus, from their very avidity to accomplish their child for higher conquests, our heroine's parents threw these young persons too much together. In worldly parents it was the extreme of folly; and

can only be accounted for, by their total ignorance of the human heart, and their false dependence upon the degrading effect of poverty. In parents seriously and rightly solicitous for their child's welfare, it would have been criminal; since even to them, (if embarrassed in their own circumstances like Colonel and Mrs. Barry,) Jocelyn's total want of fortune could not be overbalanced by the value of his character. But such a father and mother would not so have exposed their daughter; nor have thus racked the integrity of a young and ardent man.

One of the victims at length became sensible of the parent's folly, and his own imminent danger. Jocelyn was naturally susceptible of the liveliest pleasure from the contemplation of what was beautiful; his talent for drawing, heightened his perceptions of grace and symmetry; and a habit of observing every thing picturesque or graceful, caused him almost unconsciously to follow the movements of Alicia's figure, and the expressions of her face, with ceaseless admiration. But her

innocent unconsciousness of exceeding beauty; her artless display of a heart overflowing with sweet affections; of a mind as yet "unstained and pure" from the world; were even more baneful to him than her external loveliness. Passion, on such grounds, assumed the mask of virtue.

"How blessed," he thought, "would be the task of guarding that lovely nature! of teaching its sweet owner that, even under her bright flowers of innocence and sensibility, the serpent's egg lies couched, which, to crush, she must first learn to fear! Will her parents teach her this self-distrust? O! no, no!"

Jocelyn was now well aware of Colonel and Mrs. Barry's views for their daughter; and many a solitary hour was embittered to him by too strong an imagination of her future fate. A season or two, he thought, of dissipation and adulation—a mercenary or forced marriage—a broken or a hardened heart—a deceived or ruined soul!

There were moments in which, when

imagining these things, he scarcely knew whether it were not virtuous in him to wish her affections in his power, and so to prefer poverty for her, nay, worldly ruin for her, to such extinction of all that was immortal in hope, and worthy in present enjoyment. Yet again he asked himself, why was he to suppose that Alicia's character and religious principles were not of a sort to set her above the snares of vanity and ambition? Why was she not to find the noblest qualities united with rank and fortune? Why might not she be one of those shining orbs whom Providence pleases to set up in high places for the enlightening and blessing of others? And, after all, did it become him to limit the power and counsels of the Almighty, and to erect himself into a sort of Providence by rash and unwarrantable attempts to counteract the evident plans of that Almighty? Jocelyn felt that he was indeed either grown presumptuous, or bewildered by some misleading passion; and self-examination showed him where his offence lay.

From the instant in which he became fully sensible of his weakness, he was sincere in the wish of shortening his visit to Mrs. McManus; but Mrs. Barry was so pathetic in her intreaties that he would stay out the whole period named at his second grant of leave, and finish at least half a dozen designs in her album, that he saw no remedy. Conscience, however, could not be quieted. After a few days' ineffectual struggle to keep away from Castle Barry, and draw all day by the side of Mr. McManus, he took the strong resolution of at once confessing the situation of his heart to Alicia's father, simply as a plea for not being further detained; and so quitting Ireland directly.

He chose a morning upon which he knew Mrs. Barry and Alicia were gone for a long drive to make purchases at a distant town; therefore, not likely to return ere he should have ended his cruel task. He went to the avowal, not from vain-gloriousness, seeking commendation for sacrifice, but in the pure spirit of sin-

cerity; anxious to confess his own fault, that he might, with less offensiveness, admonish another. He thought, that, by proclaiming his own failing, he could with more correctness press upon a father's heart the necessity of taking a higher view of a parent's duty; and might, perhaps, awaken Colonel Barry to some apprehension for the consequences of the hazardous throw which he seemed inclined to make for his daughter's exaltation.

Jocelyn prefaced his confession, by saying, he came to thank Colonel Barry for his kind hospitality, and to take leave, as he was going from Mount Pleasant that day. He paused a moment or two ere he found voice for more; but finding it, he then briefly recapitulated the reasons which urged him to this sudden departure, distinctly stating the truth, — that from the instant in which he felt himself too deeply interested in Miss Barry, he had scrupulously guarded even his very looks when in her society; therefore, must believe Colonel Barry would

not require him to protest, that even the profession of a peculiar friendship for her had never escaped his lips, much less the breath of a tender sentiment.

The Colonel's astonishment was extreme; not exactly at the passion his daughter had inspired, but at the principle which could arm an ardent young man, with the strong will, and stronger ability, not only to tear himself from the actual presence of a beloved object, but to cut himself off from all future intercourse with her family, until his imprudent desires were mastered.

Such, indeed, was Jocelyn's solemn determination. He did not utter it without much, and evident emotion, though only one sigh burst with it from his struggling heart; and but for the changes of his cheek and voice, no one might have guessed the strength both of the passion and the principle.

Colonel Barry could not understand such a principle, much less could he comprehend what he considered to be the young man's contradictory conduct,

when, after an agitated prayer that Alicia might soon become the happy wife of a man wholly worthy of such a trust, he quitted the subject of his own regrets, and addressed himself, in the spirit of disinterested affection, to Colonel Barry as a father.

In the character of a Christian minister, young as he was, Jocelyn knew he had a higher duty to perform than that of merely confessing his own weaknesses to another fallible being: it became him to say all the truth. He therefore endeavoured to quell every personal view, while exhorting the Colonel to weigh well the consequences to his child ere he attempted to influence her choice in marriage. He then, with temperate firmness, briefly exposed the dangerous tendency of the showy education bestowing upon Alicia, and of the plans Mrs. Barry proposed for her appearance in the gay world. He said nothing to undervalue Colonel Barry's pretensions, nor yet in absurd contempt of that rank and station which give such important influence, and which are

not unfrequently made instruments of the highest good by their possessors; but he warned the parent of the many pits into which innocence and peace might fall, while in pursuit of those distinctions; suggesting the better wisdom of rather fostering Alicia's sweet dispositions amongst less tempting scenes, than urging her into the acquirement of such tastes and habits, as might finally pervert her character, and destroy even family comfort. Colonel Barry was either wilfully stupid, or positively incapable of understanding what was meant by parental responsibility and filial sacrifice; for though Jocelyn had stated, as clearly as possible, what was the duty of parents professing belief in the brevity of this life, and the eternity of another, and wherein they would sin against God's laws, and the witness of every man's conscience, the Colonel drew up a defence for himself, of which every separate article was one of these forbidden purposes. He said, "he hoped that he and Mrs. Barry knew their duty to their children as well as other

people. It was very simple—to do every thing in their power to promote their advancement in life, and to make them happy. Marcus could amply testify in their favour on this subject: the Colonel was proud to say, that to keep up his son's good connections, he supplied his purse with a liberality which sometimes obliged him to limit his own free expenditure; and then, upon Alicia's accomplishments, he had already expended a pretty fortune. Now, as he was not educating his girl to spend her days with *him*, he flattered himself he deserved some credit for most disinterested and generous affection! Mrs. Barry too took her share in sacrifice of self. What could Mr. Hastings imagine she went so much about for, if it was not to keep up and extend their acquaintance amongst a certain set against the time of Alicia's coming out? And as to the subject of marriage, Mr. Hastings might rely upon it that Ally would never be forced to marry any man. He was quite sure she would have so many eligible matches

proposed to her, that her own good sense would naturally choose the best, of itself."

It was in vain that Jocelyn tried to show how lamentably a young and virtuous heart must be perverted, ere it *would* choose only from a regard to rank or riches; in vain did he attempt to impress the Colonel with a sense of his miscalculation for the welfare of his children in a mere worldly view, when he thus supplied one with the means of contracting extravagant habits, which his after fortune might not enable him to continue, and stimulated another into quiescence, under the thought of bartering her best happiness for a sounding name.

Colonel Barry would hear no more, except Jocelyn's sincere expressions of gratitude for his having heard so much with an unruffled temper; and shuffling the business up, recommended his young friend to leave Castle Barry before the ladies returned; undertaking to make an apology for him, — relying, as he said he would do, upon Mr. Hastings's honour, not to take any steps for enlightening

his daughter upon the true reason for so hasty a departure.

An expressive smile parted Jocelyn's lips at the word *honour*; a sigh followed the smile; he felt that mere honour, opposed to his passionate wish of once pouring out his soul to Alicia, would have been like a band of flax round the hands of a giant. Happily he knew the force of a stronger law: and though even he, could not yet yield to its wholesome severity with the full consent of our frail mortal hearts, he was resolute in the purpose of obeying that law, and striving to yield it a willing obedience. Leaving only a brief message of thanks and good wishes to the absent members of Colonel Barry's family in general, he took one hurried look round the room they were in, as if bidding that too farewell; while commending the future fruit of his imperfect counsel to the care of Providence, he bowed upon the hand of Alicia's father, wrung it hastily, and passed out of the house.

Flora was the first person Jocelyn had

seen when he entered Castle Barry—she was the last he saw there. He found her learning her French lesson in an evergreen arbour, near the private entrance from Mount Pleasant, and as she jumped up to meet him, he took out of his breast a sketch book, in which he had often made studies of favourite cattle and trees at her desire, and putting it into her hand, bade her keep it for his sake, for he was going away. Strengthened by previous humiliation, because more than ever aware of his natural yearning to be understood by Alicia, Jocelyn mastered the infirm impulse which urged him, at parting from Flora, to commission her with a farewell message to her sister. His whole soul was ready to pour itself out in words, as it forcibly did in drops of agony. Upon pressing the unconscious girl in a brotherly embrace, his lips parted to pronounce the name of Alicia, and closed without uttering it.

Let not the headstrong passion of those whose youth has never known the bridle of human authority, nor the awful curb

of a higher command, deem lightly of the pang then rending the mortal part of Joscelyn's nature. He believed himself surrendering his all in this world, while obeying the law, whose sacred authority he was appointed to proclaim to others, and to keep inviolate in himself; he was leaving, too, the creature most beloved, in a fiery furnace of temptation. What a trial of faith, as well as of submission! He was equal to it now, having felt the pernicious effect of his former self-confidence; and become convinced that, in committing Alicia's course through life to the guidance of an Almighty arm, he need not grieve, for her sake, that his might not support her.

Nothing less than the heroism of Christian principle, in its fullest sense, could so have fortified a young and burning heart against the seduction of an affection, conscious to its own present purity, and throbbing through all its pulses with anxiety for the eternal welfare of its object: nothing less than the firmest persuasion of a rich recompense

in another existence could have preserved him from utter desolation of soul, while thus tearing himself from the possible chance of maintaining some partial remembrance of himself in the bosom most valued. He knew that he could not marry Alicia Barry, even if she loved him, without plunging her and himself into that worldly ruin, which, if wilfully incurred, is sinful, not pitiable; and that, trusted as he had been by her parents, (rash or inconsiderate as they were,) so to abuse their confidence would be the height of guilt. Still, however, to have Alicia Barry impressed with false notions of his character, seemed too severe a requirement: if she did not suspect him of excess of regard, she must accuse him of caprice or ingratitude.

Until this moment, no sacrifice had been demanded of Jocelyn's principles, which cost him an instant's self-conflict, nor one day of unqualified regrets. Except for his kindly uncle's sake, he had not lamented their loss of fortune. For any purpose beyond that of generous disposal,

he cared little for wealth; and for station in society, he considered himself still entitled to that which honourable descent, a complete education, and unblemished character, give a man a right to command. Thus, he was untried when he entered the dangerous sphere of Castle Barry, and his strength had failed in the trial! He had suffered the charms of Alicia's sweetness, and the interest caused by her perilous beauty, to pervade and penetrate every sense, when he ought to have foreseen the consequences to his own peace: and, after finding himself in danger, he ought to have been more earnest in seeking higher aid than his own wavering will; or to have withdrawn at once from Ireland, in despite of any solicitation to the contrary. It is true, he had neither sought nor acquired any undue power over Alicia's affections; that is, he sincerely believed himself purely considered by her as a zealous friend and profitable companion; but who was to say how much mischief he had done to his own powers of mind, by

thus admitting the growth of an usurping passion? and, if without fault against her and her parents, dare he think himself blameless to Him whose servant he was professedly become? After having once taken upon him the high trust of Christian ministry, he ought to believe his warmest affections and highest powers dedicated to such noble service. It was not for him, then, to waste life in dejected listlessness, when the care of souls was committed to him: and would he not waste it thus, if he failed to wrestle with this infant Titan, ere it should grow to giant strength?

Not even blind passion could fancy hope at the remotest distance. Jocelyn had no prospect of preferment or future fortune; Colonel and Mrs. Barry were wedded to the vanities of life; their son was avowedly running the same destructive race; their daughters were educating for a similar course, (though he prayed God that all the evil of such a destiny might be averted from them;) and as he abhorred the idea of tempting

an inexperienced heart to abandon a known duty for any imaginable good in an adopted one, even had his circumstances permitted it, he would not have wished Alicia his, either in deed or promise, unless sanctioned by her parents. How then could he answer it to his conscience, were he, by any indiscreet act or message, to awaken in her a suspicion of his attachment, and excite the tender sentiment of compassion where he ought to wish himself forgotten?

Oppressed, exhausted, faint with internal struggle (for there had been struggle, or there could not have been victory), Jocelyn threw himself down at the root of an old beech-tree in Mr. M'Manus's small domain, where, curtained by its low-hanging boughs, and showered on by its falling leaves, he strove to compose his thoughts and looks ere he approached the house.

Thought and inward apostrophes were long ineffectual. At length he took out one little book, without which he rarely went unaccompanied; and, selecting

a part, of sovereign power for every heart's pain, read in it, till his bosom-wound ceased to bleed. In the midst of this blessed study, the sound of steps startled him; the next moment he heard the voices of Alicia and her mother. He guessed that they had quitted their carriage at Mount Pleasant, and were coming by this short way into their own grounds. His heart suddenly beat with tumultuous oblivion of every thing but the joy of seeing Alicia again. It was only a moment's faltering; the conquering principle returned: and, pushing through some obstructing shrubs, he got beyond the temptation and the dangerous sound of a beloved voice, ere either of the walkers knew he had been near them.

The same day Jocelyn quitted the county of Waterford, and was on his way to Plymouth, while Colonel Barry was astonishing his lady by an account of Mr. Hastings's extraordinary conduct; finishing his description of their interview, by expressing a well-meant wish, "that the poor lad's misfortunes might not have

absolutely turned his brain." Nothing less than insanity could account, the Colonel thought, for the young man's folly in telling *him* of his fancy for his daughter, when he was so properly convinced of its madness, and might have gone off with his secret unsuspected.

Mrs. Barry was very near becoming devout, so many and so energetic were her ejaculations of thoughtfulness,— "that the odd young man was positively gone, without doing any mischief to himself or them!" and having ascertained that he had not taken her Album with him, she betook herself to find out how and where she could get its blank leaves elegantly illuminated.

The motive for Mr. Hastings's abrupt departure remained a secret between this amicable pair; and as neither of them were troubled with a nice sense of justice, they took no pains to vindicate the young man's character, even by one ordinary suggestion, when Alicia's governess inveighed against the unbecoming airs of "a person, like Mr. Jocelyn Hastings,

presuming to go and come as the humour took him, without attending to such forms of good-breeding as were invariably expected the most from persons least acquainted with the best society."

Alicia, upon whom this sudden departure had fallen with the force of a thunderbolt, was at first too much astounded, nay dismayed, to take up his defence; but when she recovered the shock, she openly proclaimed her belief that Mr. Hastings was incapable of caprice or ungratefulness; that he must have been hurried away by some business which he might not explain, and that he would certainly write to some of them after he got to England.

The openness with which she said this, and the simple earnestness with which she avowed her opinion that Jocelyn's patience had been worn out by her dullness during their Spanish lessons, perfectly satisfied her parents that Jocelyn had indeed never given her the slightest idea of his attachment; and supposing that no preference could exist in her

heart even for the most transcendent excellence, unless wooed to bestow it, they dismissed every doubt; and things then went on in their usual train.

Not so in the bosom of their inexperienced, unguided child. She felt every day, every hour, a blank, and she wondered why they were so: she lost herself in thinking why Jocelyn should have gone without taking leave of her and her mother, when she knew from Mr. McManus, that he had not left Mount Pleasant till the evening? She questioned Flora again and again as to how he looked, and what he said, when he took leave of her in the ivy arbour? Still asking for the recital to be repeated, although its repetition never failed to make her shed tears.

Numberless small circumstances, which a practised heart would have known to proceed from integrity struggling with love, pressed on her memory, yet brought no other conviction to her mind, than that Mr. Hastings had a benevolent interest in her, and had been solicitous to instruct

her from the very best motive, but that either her nervous confusion of faculties when studying with him, or the poverty of her imagination as displayed by their frequent conversations, had prevented him from feeling an individual interest in her character. She would have envied Flora his parting gift, had she not been in possession of a greater — the very book he was reading when she and her mother came upon him unawares at Mount Pleasant. Without guessing that he had flown at their approach, but seeing the well-known pocket volume lying open upon the autumnal leaves, she lifted it, purposing to give it him on the morrow.

The page on which the book was open was wet (she knew not that his tears had wetted it), and mistaking the moisture for dew, she had carefully wiped it off. Now that Jocelyn returned no more to claim it, and her mother had forgotten it, she kept the precious volume as a remembrancer of her friend; and, above all, of what he had most laboured to teach her.

To read in this book, to think over it, nay, often to weep over it, with thoughts wide wandering from its sacred subjects, but still in unison with its pure precepts, was long the business of Alicia's solitary night hours: yet she dreamt not that she loved him of whom she thought thus involuntarily and wishfully. She believed Jocelyn worthy of lasting admiration and affection; she believed he would readily yield the same to every one deserving of his regard; and she grieved, that after all the pains bestowed upon herself, she was so little attaching, that the daily companion of two recent months, and of some former years, could go away, nor even say, God bless her, except by a general message of farewell.

Days, nay weeks, passed, and no letter arrived from him at Castle Barry. He did write, however, to Mr. M^c^Manus; and from him she heard that Hastings had sailed for Madeira. Another message of grateful remembrance to Colonel Barry and his family came in this letter, and with that Alicia was obliged to be satis-

fied; or rather, by that, to assure herself he was indeed gone, and that the preposterous hope with which she had now and then cheated her sorrow, was wholly vain. She had fancied a farewell letter from him to her mother would come with the news of his departure.

Perhaps there are few feelings more painful than our first pang, when convinced that a person who has been much to ourselves, is gone, without warning from us, and evidently without thought or purpose of return. There is a dreariness in the conviction, an instant extinction of sympathy and hope, which seems, for the time, to carry death to the heart. Something too of disappointment in worshipped character, mixes with our pain.

This feeling was long and deeply felt by Alicia Barry; but as she forbore to express it, not from any consciousness of the infant affection for him which Jocelyn's resolute self-sacrifice was smothering, but from tender apprehension of causing him to be censured, no one knew how much she suffered. In less than

five months after Jocelyn's departure, Mr. McManus and his sister removed from the neighbourhood of Castle Barry; therefore no one was left there whose conversation was likely to draw forth Alicia's unsuspected feelings.

The appointment bestowed upon Mr. Beresford being in a part of South America particularly interesting to naturalists, and a rheumatic complaint, for which a warm climate promised a cure, having attacked Mr. McManus, induced him to let his pleasant house, and expatriate himself for the term of his daughter's residence at Rio Janeiro.

Alicia parted from this valuable friend with unfeigned regret; since with Mr. McManus went the last of her earliest friends: but the thought of seeing him again, accompanied by Rose and her husband, at the expiration of three years, kept her from utter desolation; and taught her, that while an expectation is left by gracious Providence, we ought not to sink under present trial.

Her mind was shortly occupied, in spite

of herself, with imaginations and apprehensions connected with her approaching birth-day. On the last day of April, she was to bid eternal farewell to the school-room, basket bonnets, and clog shoes; and to launch at once on a glittering ocean, with every sail set, and every pendant flying, for the shores of joy.

Mrs. Barry now broke silence upon the subject of her extraordinary beauty, and what was expected from it, as an indemnification to her parents for all their expense and care; and what she must do to ensure the brilliant destiny they anticipated for her. She distinctly stated her expectation, that Lady Donnington would rapturously invite her to *come out* under her auspices, in the London *haut ton,* the very next season; or perhaps during the present, should Marcus's marriage have taken place ere it closed. At any rate, the moment Marcus married, his sister might be certain of being asked to accompany him and his wife to some fashionable resort, either abroad or at home; when mixing familiarly with a

smaller circle of distinguished personages, she could not fail of acquiring such a manner as was necessary for a young woman's effective appearance in public; therefore, by the time the town had reassembled, she would be quite fitted to produce herself with Lady Donnington, or Lady Sarah Barry, for a chaperon.

While Mrs. Barry, in pronouncing the titled name of her future daughter-in-law, thought only of her rank, Alicia's simpler heart flowed with a partial feeling towards the young woman, whose sentiments could not be of a worldly nature, or she would not have encouraged the attachment of a mere gentleman; and half playfully she adverted to the circumstance, beseeching her mother to let her remain of Lady Sarah's opinion, namely, that the middle rank of life is the safest and the happiest.

Alicia, in truth, saw nothing presented to her in the coming future, except a race of vanity, with the goal of marriage at the end of it; and for the qualifications

of the husband desired, nothing seemed asked beyond fashion and fortune.

Ideas, natural to youth, at least to worthy youth, upon both subjects, expressed with all the energy of which her gentleness was capable, were laughed at by her good-humoured mother, who treated them as *pretty speeches*, quite right to say, but not to act upon; visionary notions, expressed by a girl wholly ignorant of what she was undervaluing. "Every little simpleton, before she comes out, says exactly the same, my dear Ally!" was Mrs. Barry's easy observation. "Wait a few months, and then see what you think of public places, and being amongst the first in the best society."

Alicia more than doubted, that no society would ever be so dear and delightful as that which she had enjoyed, during many a winter, round the turf-fire at Mount Pleasant; when Rose McManus presided over the tea-table, and Jocelyn helped her with the bright kettle; and Alicia herself alternately

watched and waited on the silver-headed Mr. M'Manus, as he took his tea and told anecdotes of the interesting men of his day.

Alicia was right in this belief: for, in those times, she was at that age when every kindling capacity is awake, and eager for information; when the conversation of older and more intelligent persons gives enthusiastic pleasure to the young, and, as it opens their minds, opens their hearts also, to pure and grateful affections.

Sweet and dear also is the remembrance in after life, when all our passions are afloat, and our rectitude endangered by the excess of permitted affections— sweet and dear is the remembrance of the period in which we have enjoyed the the highest delight from pleasures into which no doubtful or dangerous feeling entered! of places so simple, that every feature of them is instantly present to memory: the well-known pictures on the walls; the familiar forms of useful furniture (each article of which, affectionate

fancy has more particularly appropriated to some preferred individual); the cheerful hearth; the very carpet of the floor on which so many of our joyous steps have been printed; all, all come on our hearts in the midst of tumultuous shows, or in the still midnight after such glare is gone, with gushes of yearning tenderness! — and if the grave has closed over some or all of the bright faces and warm hearts, which then beamed on, and beat with our own, O who may tell our deep, deep feeling of desolation? Could Alicia have fully comprehended what was the exhibition for which her parents destined her, and the sole purpose for which they had been educating her very beauty, it is probable she would have refused indignantly, though fearfully, to stain the maiden modesty of her character, by submitting to such degradation; but, without wit for an arranged tissue of deceptions, Mrs. Barry instinctively managed to impress her credulous child with the conviction, that her parents only sought to give her pleasure hereafter,

and to see her happily settled, although they persisted in supposing that she would soon find both, in things at present distasteful.

Believing her mother's intentions purely kind, the artless girl cheerfully consented to try the experiment, and go to Dublin or to London whenever it was required of her; trusting that if, after that, she continued to prefer home and tranquil occupations, she might be permitted to return, and resume them for life.

As Alicia's seventeenth birth-day did not occur till the month of April was just closing, and the Dublin season was ended (in consequence of a great personage's illness), she had a reprieve from the exhibition she dreaded. Mrs. Barry's confident expectation of her son's marriage, and of his sister's consequent invitation by his titled bride, considerably reconciled her to this delay. But she herself was not to be kept away from pleasant things all that tedious time;

and she soon accepted an invitation to join a party at the Black Rocks, where private theatricals, public breakfasts, and incessant gossip, formed a whimsical contrast to the nun-like retirement in which Mrs. Brudenell was exhorted to preserve her youthful charge during the period of Colonel and Mrs. Barry's absence.

Even so, Alicia enjoyed her sequestration: for she had numberless interesting employments; some useful to others, some improving or amusing to herself; some the consequence of Jocelyn Hastings's wider practice of benevolence, during his two months visit at Mount Pleasant. Flora, too, was growing into her heart by a thousand nameless sympathies of unfolding taste and feeling; and although Flora was not in the least handsome, her countenance was full of such vivid sensibility and awakened intellect, that its movements were more interesting than common place beauty. Alicia unconsciously liked her sister's face the better, because now and then a momentary look of her earnest eyes,

recalled the finer expression of Jocelyn Hastings.

Poor Flora, however, had a proud heart and a violent temper. She was subject to frenzies of anger; and her pride too often withheld her from acknowledging their excess, or making reparation for their devastations. Yet as she confessed the enormity of both her faults on her own repentant pillow, and felt that she was not truly penitent until she could openly humble herself, the struggles of rebellious nature with the better principle were sore and frequent. This alternately stormy and sunny character Alicia watched with lovely and loving gentleness; unwearied, even when her dove-like spirit went forth again and again over its troublous waters, nor found resting-place to abide on, nor green herb to bring back in sign of peace. But Flora was not always sullen or resentful; and the lesson which she spurned at the moment, never failed to sink into her heart, and soften it to amendment. She loved her sister with aching intensity;—

nay, to a passionateness which often rendered her too susceptible of injury offered, or pain occasioned to Alicia by their parents themselves. Her premature intellect, indeed, gave her too quick an insight into the faults of her parents; so that had not Alicia happily acquired a power over her, she would have been in danger of despising authority, and of arrogating a superiority of judgment to herself, which even the most forward youth may not claim.

To describe the sentiments of both sisters towards their parents, is a difficult task. It could not be said, that either of them loved their father and mother as they really tried to do, and believed they did; for Flora had too much mind, and Alicia too much heart, for that feeling of love towards such persons as Colonel and Mrs. Barry, as blesses the children of parents formed to inspire filial devotion, and to render it a safe worship.

Neither of the sisters were aware of any unkindness or wilful neglect on the part of their good-tempered mother; nay,

they remembered a succession of petty indulgences about fine clothes, holidays, birth-day *fêtes*, &c., and most particular solicitude to have them highly accomplished: still they could not even then feel that any valuable seed had been carefully sown, or carelessly scattered, by father or mother; and, as such, there was a barrenness in their thoughts towards them, which was less the fault of the soil than of its proprietors.

On the score of duty, however, both sisters were thoroughly principled. Although their religious knowledge was yet in its dawn, therefore often shadowed by misapprehensions, it awakened them to a clear view of earthly obligations; and the commandment to honour their parents being enforced on their hearts by the example of Rose M[c]Manus, became doubly powerful from its illustration in her person, and that of her husband.

Rose had been for years a sort of martyr in witness of filial duty. Neither she, nor the admirable young man to whom she was then engaged, allowed themselves to

think of marrying, until he had obtained a long-promised official appointment, which would enable him to sell out of the army, and give up the sum obtained from his commission, (together with all the small income they had hitherto shared with him,) to a widowed mother and sister.

Rose's willing devotion to her father's comfort for those six or seven years of weary waiting, was admirably calculated to stamp additional reverence upon the sacred duty of a child; and Alicia never wished to forget the heart-rending, almost self-accusing regret, with which Rose had risen from her father's parting embrace, when quitting her home for such a distant land as that of Brazil.

Such scenes and impressions are abiding lessons, and would have been invaluable; had there been any experienced or enlightened friend at hand, to have separated error carefully from truth, defined the limits even of our greatest duties, and shown how necessary it may be sometimes for a parent's injunctions to be weighed

in the balance of God's laws, ere the humblest child obeys them. Alicia and Flora were left to slower and surer teaching.

Flora's remembrances of Jocelyn Hastings were as fresh and as fondly cherished as those of Alicia. She loved him, as a child of twelve years old might do, to innocent excess; for, in addition to all she had heard of him from her infancy amongst the old servants at Mount Pleasant, after he had quitted it, she saw how kind he was to the poor, and how delightful he made himself at Castle Barry during his late visit.

Her fast-ripening mind had rendered her alive to the kindling effect of his varied conversation: she felt something of gratified pride, in discerning that he did not consider her as a mere child; that he often addressed an uncommon remark to her; and never made one of those cruelly careless observations upon her mere features, which she was accustomed to hear from her parents, and other coarse-minded persons.

Flora felt that Mr. Hastings found something pleasing in a face, where, indeed, heart and mind were ever working, since he had more than once told her she was growing like Alicia. She felt that he understood her fits of melancholy taciturnity and rash rejoinders, for he soothed both when others were dealing harshly with her. There is something flattering to self-love in the notion of being understood, or of being solicitously searched into; and for this reason, Flora liked Jocelyn. His favourable opinion of her looks, was another claim upon her childish affection.

Poor Flora, from an early developed taste, was prematurely awake to the impressions of human beauty; and as she felt the exquisite pleasure which symmetry and grace can bestow upon those who behold them, it was natural she should wish to have the power in her own person of so delighting others. At any rate, since she thirsted to be an object of affection, and thought every one handsome that she loved, she could not believe it possible

that she was very warmly regarded, when she heard her outward form contumeliously spoken of, by those who drew upon her for a grateful return to their boasted attachment. Mr. Hastings proved his sincerity, by never breathing a word which could turn either her own attention, or that of another, to any defect or deficiency in her which she could not mend. So far, does the one great rule extend, of "doing unto others, as we would they should do unto us!" No wonder Flora should idolize Mr. Hastings. His memory, therefore, did not perish between her and Alicia.

The month of June wore out. Colonel and Mrs. Barry returned from their excursion, in a transport of expectation. An English family was at the Black Rock, who, being a shade lower in society than Lady Donnington, spoke of Mr. Marcus Barry as a perfect star in the London world of fashion. Marcus himself had written immediately after Signor Warbellino's performance at his house, and the result seemed, that before another

two months were over, there would be a Lady Sarah, or a Lady Georgina Barry. Upon the strength of such a certainty, Mrs. Barry directly returned to order dancing dresses, and walking dresses for Alicia, that she might be prepared to obey a summons, however sudden, to join her new sister at Cheltenham, or by the sea side.

These joyful preparations came quickly to a stop, by the arrival of two letters from London. One of them was addressed to Colonel Barry in such a scrawling hand, that it was thrown aside until the other had been opened. The latter proved to be from the mercantile gentleman to whom the products of Mrs. Barry's West India estates were yearly consigned, and upon whom all bills in his son's favour had hitherto been drawn, even after both father and son had been told that no receipts were in hand, and that Mr. Owenson had no longer any securities to offer for monies sought in the way of loan. Mr. Owenson had himself advanced so much, that he could advance no more;

nay, he was then necessitated, from an unexpected loss at sea, to put in his own claim for repayment.

The exposition made in consequence, of Colonel Barry's ruinous circumstances, and the elaborate calculations given, were too astounding for a weak intellect either to follow or to admit. The Colonel professed himself incapable of understanding what Mr. Owenson could mean, for that if his estates were, what all Jamaica could testify, worth a hundred thousand pounds, where could be the difficulty of finding securities, since parcels of the estates themselves, afforded sufficient security? He felt persuaded, that Mr. Owenson was either one of the most dishonest, or the most blundering men of business imaginable. It was base, he said, in the man who had been living for years out of those estates, and who had been treated so liberally as never to have his accounts enquired into, (though the fellow made a constant farce of begging it,) it was base in such a person to turn short upon his employer, with the incredible assur-

ance, that he could not raise any more money! Why had he not said this before? Why had he not said it to Marcus, who would *of course* have drawn in?

Colonel Barry quite forgot that Mr. Owenson had, in every one of his letters for the last three years, enforced the necessity of retrenchment instead of increased expenditure; had warned him, that the estates were alarmingly falling off in their returns; and at every fresh mortgage had shown him how surely his remaining income must be swallowed up by the yearly interest. He would not take time to suppose the fact, that Marcus had listened to Mr. Owenson, as he (the Colonel) had read the agent's letters, with a careless determination of thinking him either a croaker or a niggard, therefore not to be regarded.

What, however, was to be done?—Money must be had somehow; nothing could go on without it. The Colonel looked at his wife, when asking the question. His own capacity had reached its limit; having gone as far as to the decision

that Mr. Owenson was either a rogue or a fool, and that nothing was vitally wrong in his West India affairs. How to extract any substantial benefit to himself out of this conviction he knew not.

Mrs. Barry suggested that he should instantly cross over to England, and, with the assistance of Marcus, *shew up* the dishonesty of Mr. Owenson, and take the concern out of his hands. With a new agent a new arrangement might be made, and a suitable sum of money would, of course, be readily advanced by such a person. Mrs. Barry always heard that nothing was more coveted than these agencies, for that the men regularly made their fortune. She did not understand how they did it, but since it was so, an agent, of course, would be found at a moment's warning. At all events, a grand push must be made this very year, if the Colonel hoped to see his son married to a daughter of Lord Harlech, and his daughter to a Duke. Marcus must be supplied, until his marriage with Lady Sarah should enable him to raise money

for himself; and Alicia must have the means of appearing with the bride in the very best style, or even her beauty would go for nothing.

Mrs. Barry allowed, that her Dublin tradespeople had been vexatiously pressing of late for the settlement of their last two years' bills. She thought, however, it was possible to make them wait; but money she must have at command, as Alicia, besides things furnished on credit, would require scores of such expensive trifles as are every day starting up, and from the earliest possession of which, a young person principally obtains the stamp of elegance. In short, Mrs. Barry complacently concluded, that if they might weather through only six months longer, they would be repaid by the exaltation of both their children, and have the delightful consciousness of having done their duty thoroughly.

With this civility from her conscience, this excellent mother recommended opening her second letter. To her surprise, it was found to be from Marcus,

whose scrawl upon the cover was certainly not to be recognized.

There were not many lines in this momentous epistle, but infinitely too much matter. It began with an abrupt notification of Lady Sarah Mostyn's clandestine marriage; incoherently stated that he was ruined, therefore going immediately after General Granby to India. He neither told what sort of ruin he had incurred, nor assigned any possible cause for Lady Sarah's deceptive conduct, nor named the period of his proposed departure; nor even mentioned General Granby's last offer of friendship and patronage: all was left to the imagination of his parents.

Mrs. Barry chose to suppose, that he meant to say his peace was ruined, and his honour so wounded by Lady Sarah's duplicity, that he could not remain in the same country with her. The astonished Colonel knew not what to think. He had a confused notion, that Marcus's pecuniary affairs were in a worse condition than his feelings; and that the total stop-

page of current cash from that tricking fellow, Mr. Owenson, was the real cause of this extraordinary resolution to go to India. At any rate, one bubble was burst; yet, infatuated with the wish of trying another, this unwise father roused himself to the direful necessity of taking an immensity of trouble, of visiting London directly, to argue his son out of his boyish despair; of obliging Mr. Owenson to come down with a handsome sum; of seeing Lady Donnington, and engaging her, if possible, to bring out Alicia; for to bring out Alicia themselves with any effect, in the coming winter, was next to impossible, as the lease of their Dublin house would end just after Christmas, and where were they to find money for renewing it, or taking another?

Mrs. Barry's fortitude had supported her very respectably through the first direful disappointment, and all the successive discussions, until these brought her to the fatal conclusion that she was not to go to Dublin, and give great assemblies with, or without her daughter. At

such a finale, she uttered a doleful cry, and fell back in an hysteric fit.

Hitherto this scene had been without witnesses; but at her mother's sobbing voice, Alicia, who chanced to be passing the door of the room, hurried in, and received the disconsolate mourner upon her bosom. In answer to her agitated enquiries, Colonel Barry abruptly exclaimed, that "her brother had been jilted by a good-for-nothing young woman; and that, in a fit of childish despair, he was going to ruin all his prospects, by exchanging for India; and that, of course, her mother was in great grief at such folly, particularly as it would prevent them from bringing her out that season, as they had intended." Colonel Barry cared not to avow the humiliating addition of pecuniary embarrassment, to this bitter vexation; and as he said nothing on the subject of money, even Mrs. Barry's hysterics respected his caution; uttering no raving whatever, that could lead her unworldly child to suspect she

was not grieving purely for her son's wounded affections.

Alicia was too suddenly assaulted by this unexpected scene, to be capable of much exertion of thought. She felt bewildered as well as afflicted; and though she saw her mother weeping profusely, was unable to shed tears, or to express her deep concern for her brother, otherwise than by paleness and trembling. She was totally ignorant of the relative advantages, or disadvantages, of a young man's situation in different regiments; she was not told of the family involvements; and she naturally took upon trust every thing her father said on the subject of his son's removal to another land; indeed, she shrunk from distant India with affectionate horror. No wonder, then, that she should join her voice to her mother's, when the latter was sufficiently recovered to advise her husband's immediate departure for England, praying him to call upon the powerful influence of Lady Donnington, if a father's authority failed.

Colonel Barry suggested the probabi-

lity of their having lost Lady Donnington, as well as Lady Sarah Mostyn; as the young lady's aunt, she might deem it right to drop all connection with the family she had misled so grossly.

Alicia, with youthful warmth, repelled such an imagination, for the honour of human nature. "If Lady Sarah had really encouraged her brother, Lady Donnington might grieve over such conduct, but would not surely sanction it. Indeed, as the marriage was a clandestine one, it could not be approved by any of her near kindred."

This inference was more convincing than Alicia's first argument; and upon the strength of it, the Colonel agreed to go directly to England; secretly hoping, that if he could stop Marcus without other interference, he might find Lady Donnington amiably disposed to indemnify him for his disappointment from Lady Sarah, by accepting the charge of Miss Barry's beauty for the next sea-side season, or the later town season.

By the time her mother's childish mind

had caught at some gilded hope connected with the idea of Lady Georgina Carey, and her tongue was volubly enumerating her son's many pretensions to a distinguished fortune, Alicia's oppressed feelings gave way; and deeply commiserating her brother, while fearing that he would indeed remove to far-off India, she sat down for the first time since entering the room, and melted into noiseless tears.

Mrs. Barry took fright at seeing her long-continued emotion; and alarmed lest any one should be enabled to guess at what had befallen them, until they could see how things would settle, and *how they had best be represented*; she exhorted her to dry her eyes, and get over this indiscreet grief, since it was incumbent on them to keep the humiliating story of Marcus's disappointment from every body, until they might be able to put a tolerable face upon it; so neither Flora nor Mrs. Brudenell must be allowed to see any thing unusual in Alicia's looks or manner.

It was long before Alicia could be made to comprehend where the disgrace lay, if not with the heartless jilt, when a man's honest affections were deceived; and longer ere she saw the necessity of waging a fruitless war with nature, merely that she might escape ridicule from persons who deemed any natural sympathy ridiculous. She remembered, indeed, that Rose McManus had often recommended the cultivation of cheerfulness for the sake of our associates, and as a positive duty; but then Rose had taught her, that it must be a real, not pretended cheerfulness, produced by the heart's submission; a healthful colour, not a mask of paint. Here she was enjoined to disguise her present feelings, merely for the purpose of being able to deny their existence at a future day, if needful; or to prevent the whole truth of their situation being conjectured.

Alicia was not unprovided with arguments to prove the pernicious consequences of such a system for life; but timid and irresolute, and deeply im-

pressed with the duty of filial reverence, she kept silence, and strove to obey her mother's command, by stifling her growing tears.

Colonel Barry posted off to England: Mrs. Barry unwillingly remained in Waterford. The poor Colonel reached London too late for stopping his son, but in excellent time for being stopped himself.

After driving to his son's house, he found it in the hands of its original owner, who directly did himself the honour of saying, that he had written by the last Irish mail, to beg the favour of Colonel Barry to settle the small account for the payment of which he had been so obliging as to pledge himself. Of course, the letter had not arrived when the Colonel left Castle Barry. The civil claimant believed Mr. Barry was gone to the Continent; but having always conducted himself in the most gentlemanly style, it was impossible for any of his creditors to doubt that his family would honour all his bills; and that done, no young man disappearing from the world

of fashion would ever have left a higher character behind him.

Colonel Barry was stunned by this address, and by the shock of hearing that his son was actually considered gone from that world in which such ruinous exertions had been made to fix him. His consternation increased while successively hearing of first one tradesman's letter, and then another, which this Mr. A. or B. had been called upon to forward, per post, to Castle Barry. It was too evident that Marcus was overwhelmed in debt; and how could he be so, when he had spent so large an allowance yearly? Nothing less than gambling or some improper connection could account for it.

Colonel Barry thought the last conjecture solved the problem both of his son's delay in securing Lady Sarah Mostyn, and of her indignant flight with another: his vexation against Marcus increased with this suspicion. In an unusual chafe of temper, he declared he would not pay his son's debts; that the

tradesmen might wait till Mr. Barry came into possession of the entailed property, or till he paid them by instalments: for his own part, he repeated, he would not discharge any account except that which he could not help doing; namely, that for the lease and fitting up the young Guardsman's house.

The owner of the deserted mansion was not inclined to waste his breath in pleading for others; he began at once with the items of his various accounts, and took great merit to himself in offering to accept half the sum required for the three years' lease on the condition of having it given up to him at once, and so enabling him to find another tenant immediately.

The Colonel was barely competent to refer the settlement of their business to his attorney: his own weak head was well nigh overpowered by the sum total of the bill for silk hangings, alabaster figures, Scagliola slabs, &c., and by certain recollections of larger bills left behind him in Ireland; but the very shallowness of his brain prevented the

conviction of ruin from being deep; so, after sitting a full quarter of an hour in what Mr. A. or B. called a daze, which was literally stupifying over a mental chaos, he got up, and, giving his address at a neighbouring hotel, stepped back into the hackney-coach that had brought him, his portmanteau, and servant; and telling the bowing, yet doubting creditor, that he should hear from him the next morning, after having seen his agent, drove off to the city.

While Colonel Barry was disputing with the house-agent, his valet had been getting at some information about his young master, from one of his deposed domestics. He learned from this gossiping fellow, that Mr. Barry was said to have been *completely humbugged* by Lady Sarah Mostyn, and had gone in his first fit of desperate vexation to one of the Clubs, where he had lost 2000*l.* or 3000*l.*; and that, knowing how many other claims were upon him, though of a different nature, he had wisely slipped his collar, and walked off.

"What! with a debt of honour unpaid?"

"O no! Mr. Barry's honour was unimpeachable: he had raised the money somehow before he went."

Colonel Barry breathed again when he was assured that his son had only left tradespeople and servants hopeless of payment, while satisfying an unprincipled gamester. But where *was* Marcus? This the valet could not answer; and ordering his coachman to drive to Messrs. ———, the Colonel proceeded to learn the fate of his prodigal. He found then, that what had appeared at first a rash and wilful act in his son, was in fact the only prudent thing possible to him; and had been recommended by Messrs. ——— after they heard the rumour of his loss at *rouge-et-noir*. At that precise moment they were able to offer him a very large sum if he would exchange with an officer now on leave from one of the regiments gone out with General Granby to India; and as this proposal was made when the young man was smarting under the mor-

tification of Lady Sarah Mostyn's marriage, and the positive assurance of Mr. Owenson that he could neither raise more money for him nor for his father, he had at once accepted it; endeavouring to gloss his real reasons over by pretending to be now in earnest as a soldier, therefore desirous to see service, and to seize the fine opening afforded him of quick promotion by the powerful situation of his military godfather.

Messrs. ——— knew no further than that they had undertaken to get the exchange gazetted so quickly that Mr. Barry saw no reason why he should delay his voyage a moment longer than was necessary. A fine Indiaman was just sailing at the time; Mr. Barry was gone in her, with letters of credit to a very respectable amount upon a banker in Calcutta. Messrs. ——— did not insinuate that they suspected he was in a hurry to escape creditors he could not pay, and whom he had begun to fear his father would find it as impossible to satisfy.

Colonel Barry scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry at this account. The disaster, however, was past remedy; the heiress was married, and his son was deeply in debt. What better plan could be devised than this, of Marcus's exile for a few years, while his father's estates were coming round, and he meanwhile in the way of wealth and honour? — It was a pity indeed that such a fine young man should be removed from the London world, and the chances of an ennobling matrimonial connection, and that Mrs. Barry and the Colonel should be so long without the pleasure of hearing their admired son talk, and talk like Lord Lewis Rivers himself.

But it was surprising how soon Colonel Barry got reconciled to irremediable evils merely from his constitutional incapability of much thought or continuance of depression. Although he fancied a sort of enjoyment from distinctions for his children, which made him pursue them eagerly, any calamity to the persons themselves for whom he was striving, made

but a slight impression upon his unstable character. He now vented his concern in a few common-place lamentations over young men's hastiness; hinting his own readiness to have cleared his son's affairs, had he only known of their disorder; and making very light of every thing except what he chose to call (yet not to think) Marcus's folly in throwing up the Guards for any staff appointment under the suns of India.

Taking a civil leave of the gentlemen to whose good-natured offices the young spendthrift was perhaps to be indebted for a retrieved character, the Colonel retook possession of his hackney-coach, and jolted on to the city.

At the city he arrived by the slow stages of the Strand, Fleet-street, Ludgate-hill, &c.; the usual procession of coaches, carts, waggons, drays, and paviours stopping up the way, and allowing him ample time to chew the cud of sour thoughts. Mr. Owenson was at home, and in his counting-house. The interview was far from agreeable. Mr. Owenson,

too, had a letter for the Colonel in the Irish mail; and he hastened to repeat its contents.

So far from wishing to retain the agency, Mr. Owenson was desirous of resigning it: requesting Colonel Barry would take steps for supplying his place (as his own unforeseen loss would oblige him to go for some years abroad), offering all his accounts for the scrutiny of any gentleman appointed to succeed him.

Nothing could be fairer; nothing could be more distinctly proved than Mr. Owenson proved, by various notes from Mr. Barry, that he had pressed the subject of West Indian failures upon the young man with as much earnestness as their relative situations admitted. The Colonel might have been reconciled to his agent from this exposition of his honesty, had not the urgent wants of Mr. Owenson obliged him to require an immediate settlement of the debt contracted to himself; and as he was too much in the secret of the Colonel's insufficient credit to accept bills from him at any date, there

was no other alternative than that of raising money by a mortgage on Castle Barry to the amount of half the property.

The place was romantic as to scenery, and remarkably comfortable for a residence; but very little productive land was attached to it, therefore its returns were barely adequate to pay the yearly interest of the sum thus raised. Much time, however, would be gained; certain burthens would be lifted from the Colonel's shoulders for the present; and for the future, Mr. Owenson strenuously advised him, as the West India property was not regularly entailed, to go himself to Jamaica, and decide upon selling part of it to clear the remainder. Mr. Owenson had never disguised from his employer that he thought his resident agent abroad neither active nor judicious; and he now warned the Colonel to prepare for finding things in a much worse state than he apprehended: yet urging this as a stronger argument for their being looked into.

Colonel Barry received this sensible

advice very coldly. He deemed it incumbent upon him to be high and distant to a man who had used him so ill as to be pressed by real misfortune at the moment in which he was pennyless through his own wilful waste; and who, forced by his own affairs to act in a different country for their re-establishment, could no otherwise serve his early employer than by recommending an able successor.

This recommendation the Colonel declined in the spirit of extraordinary prudence; inwardly extolling his own sagacity, for taking timely alarm at such a cunning show of friendship; and telling Mr. Owenson that he might depend upon very soon hearing from his lawyer satisfactorily, he bowed himself out of the room.

In something more of worldly knowledge Colonel Barry was his wife's superior. When he got into his hackney-coach again, he entered it with the conviction that he must do something extraordinary, if he hoped to escape a crash and a crush of family consequence. To

marry Alicia richly and greatly was now a positive necessity; to induce Lady Donnington to save him the expense of doing so, was an equal necessity; but how to bring these desirable events about!

As the Colonel jolted along the crowded streets, he commenced and digested a plan of consummate generalship: it was to call upon Lady Donnington, and boldly assume the merit or blame of his son's transfer to India; to affect great zeal for the military character, and displeasure of his son, for having sunk it in that of a mere man of pleasure; in short, to make it appear as if the young man's exit had been the consequence of his father's prejudice rather than of his necessities. Thus he would preserve the reputation of wealth (an important reputation when a young lady was coming forward), stifle any reports that might be circulating with regard to Mr. Barry's debts, and leave it doubtful whether he had not acted thus from the desire of an active life for his son, after his disappointment in love.

Still infatuated with the same pernicious expectations which had paved the way to his son's ruin, this senseless father would not see that he was once more casting into the same lottery for another child. A great throw, a great gain, or utter ruin, was contemplated by him with a gamester's coolness: nothing short of these seemed capable of satisfying this mighty small mind. Not for a moment did he turn his thoughts to immediate reduction of family expenses, and an instant surrender of all ambitious views for his unconscious daughter.

Prepared to affect the tone of ease, affluence, and soldierly cheerfulness, therefore to hold very different language from what he had done to his son's agents, Colonel Barry quickly changed his travelling dress at an hotel, and walked to Lady Donnington's.

By a miracle, her Ladyship was at home, and not in a crowd. At first she was perfectly unconscious of having seen the Colonel before; but as he was of hardier nerve, or more opaque of sense

than his son, he persevered in recalling the circumstances of Lady Donnington's visit to his house, until she did remember it.

The moment she was brought to recall that distant period, which was principally brought about by the Colonel's happy quotation of her own lively remarks upon his daughter's eyes, she uttered a pretty cry of recollection; and, instead of asking what the young lady had grown into, or what was become of her brother, turned upon her company with a second edition of her former poignant comparisons on the subject.

Every one was enchanted with Lady Donnington's fanciful portrait; to the fidelity of which Colonel Barry gave smiling and bowing assent, for utterance of so direct a falsehood was impossible: the animated describer having forgotten every peculiarity of colour, shape, or expression in the countenance of the lovely original.

Colonel Barry was on tiptoe of expectation, as he stated, with affected com-

posure, that his Alicia was really come to that very troublesome period when Mrs. Barry must prepare for the fatigue of going about with a young lady through her first season of balls, and he for joining the body of absentees (he concluded), if his wife should take the whim of wishing their daughter to see English society.

Lady Donnington agreed with him in abhorring the fatigue of taking young ladies about. One or two male visitors begged her to intercede with Colonel Barry for London, that he might give them a chance of seeing that *bouquet of jewels* so admired by Lady Donnington. The Colonel believed himself sure of his point. Not at all: — without regarding either request or remark, her Ladyship began an earnest canvass for some projected party, in the discussion of which minor concerns were at once swallowed up.

Something went wrong during this business, for Lady Donnington looked for a moment piqued and astonished; then repeated in a tone of irony, after

each person's excuse, "And you, too, going to Madame Kabitka's!" but quickly recovering self-possession, when the last denial was given, she burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, exclaiming, "O! the amusing mob she will have got together! I hear the sweetly-civil simpleton issued her cards by book, and invited all Grosvenor Square round, and all Portland Place long; conceiving the people of Portland Place civilized!"

This insolent sarcasm took effect: three or four very young men protested they would not go, to be shuffled up in such a strange pack; and one untitled woman, of a certain age, observed, that it would be much better to wait and see how the Polish Princess *took*, before girls were *committed* by being seen at her assemblies: if they were not select, they must be horrid.

Lady Donnington begged and prayed Mrs. Wolsey would not stay away from Madame Kabitka's. ("Princess Azorinski's," amended Lord Lewis Rivers, between yawning and smiling.) She

was dying to hear what the odd-looking woman would give them by way of entertainment; she supposed a dance of Polish dwarfs. Had any body seen Princess Kabitka? She heard there was nothing half so hideous in the world: a mouth from ear to ear,—tin eyes, absolute tin eyes,—and skin, a regular mustard colour!

Nothing could be more imprudent than this throwing down the gauntlet, where so many were almost pledged to take it up. A very young senator, who had accepted an invitation to the party given by the foreign lady, stepped forward in defence of her. He confessed that Lady Donnington was quite correct: Princess Azorinski had the widest mouth, the lightest grey eyes, and the horridest skin possible; but she had also the whitest teeth, the most good-humoured laugh, the gayest look with her eyes, and the most amusing disregard of sorting colours to her complexion; in short, her very ugliness was piquant, and her negligence entertaining. Lady Donnington

instantly accused the speaker of being in love with the Polish princess, and rallied him either so well, or so unmercifully, that he was first put to silence, and then to flight.

Colonel Barry exerted himself with parental solicitude to ingratiate himself with Lady Donnington, by bestowing the due portion of rhapsodical admiration upon her Ladyship's sallies; but all to no effect. Admiration was nothing to Lady Donnington, unless it bestowed power over the powerful. The whole ordinary population of London and Westminster might have gazed after, and lauded her, without exciting one grateful or gratified feeling in her selfish heart. Lady Donnington's world consisted solely of a few inhabitants residing near the two parks.

She therefore scarcely heard Colonel Barry announce his intention of returning directly to Ireland; but, just catching the name of his son, exclaimed, "By the way, what has become of Mr. Barry? Do tell him to go, by all means, to Madame Kabitka's."

"How perverse you are, Lady Donnington!" exclaimed Lord Lewis Rivers: "you might as well call me Mr. Sedan. Kabitka is a Russian coach, or cart, or some such vehicle."

In the general laugh which followed this correction, the Colonel found an opportunity of saying what he had purposed concerning his son. He observed, with many deprecatory smiles and looks of homage, that, being an old soldier, he believed there was more danger for a young man in such a delightful circle as the one now surrounding him than in a field of battle: Lady Donnington and the rest of the ladies present must pardon him for saying so. He then, with a loftier tone, briefly stated his opinion of a young man's duty, after having *chosen* to enter the army, when he ought, as an only son, to have remained at large; showing why he had accepted General Granby's offer of a staff appointment for his son, and removed him to actual service, instead of letting him remain a mere St. James's-street soldier.

So far the Colonel's speech was clear and convincing; but when he endeavoured to say that his son and he had missed each other in the Irish Channel, and that he must hasten back to see the young man off, the deception he was practising to prevent the discovery of Marcus's real flight from an arrest, would have been visible to every person present, had any one cared enough for father or son to give either a second thought.

Lady Donnington exclaimed in an accent of complete indifference at the Colonel's hard-heartedness, in sending his son to die of cholera morbus just when town was pleasantest! The gallant Colonel smilingly declared he was proof against her Ladyship's ingenious attempt at frightening him: all he could say was, that if ball or climate had its billet for Marcus, he must bow to fate, and conclude it was decreed that Lady Donnington's favourite (so he dexterously denominated Alicia) should be an heiress.

Necessity is said to sharpen the wit: Colonel Barry certainly proved the truth

of this axiom. His last remark was not powerless; he saw by the faces of those near him, that his daughter was already set down for a fortune as well as a beauty.

Lady Donnington continued to rail at his cruelty to his son. "Indeed I am quite vexed with you, Colonel Barry. Mr. Barry was so good natured!—I could always depend upon him. A character much too high to bestow upon you, Lord Lewis."

"A character I should most particularly detest," returned his Lordship with his usual half-insolent indifference. "I trust the fates have not inflicted upon me any officious personage in the shape of a friend, who will ever say I fuss about handing women to their carriages, holding their shawls, toadying their immense heap of bracelets and rings, &c. &c. Once for all, Lady Donnington, I beg to assure you, that I hold all such proceedings in abhorrence; and if I were not distractedly in love with you (which I tell you for the nine millionth time, without the least effect) I would not endure the mon-

strous annoyance of seeing other fellows so very exceedingly bored."

Lady Donnington received this flattering avowal as the speaker expected, with a more flattering smile, repeating "absurd creature!" more than once, while motioning to him to ring the bell.

Lord Lewis Rivers, desiring another young man to do it, remained lolling upon a sofa, with an air of perfect privilege.

Lady Donnington choosing to understand that Colonel Barry was going, bade him good morning, without further reference to Mr. Barry or his beautiful sister; sending him away inwardly convinced that the fashionable spirit of indifference is excellently pleasant, until a man's own interests are in question.

Although partially disappointed, Colonel Barry fancied he had succeeded in exciting curiosity about his daughter, and in establishing a respectable reason for his son's transfer to India. Lady Donnington's total silence upon the subject of her niece's marriage, flattered him into believing it was preserved in compliment

to his feelings; and that she thus tacitly admitted the public fact of Lady Sarah's dishonourable conduct. How would he have been humbled could he have heard the few short sentences after his departure, in which Lord Lewis Rivers summed up the private history of Lady Donnington's Irish friend, as he called Marcus Barry, to say nothing of the heartless carelessness with which Lady Donnington, after repeating more than once, "You shall not run the poor man down!" made up a gay party for Richmond.

It was a full fortnight from the time of his leaving Ireland, before Colonel Barry, even with the assistance of an expert lawyer, and a new agent, more specious than solid, could effect the changes which were necessary ere he could return home. The Park-lane house-letter was professedly obsequious, but shrewdly watchful; and the Colonel had no rest either from him, or from the importunities of his son's desperate creditors, until he had wholly satisfied the first, and, for family charac-

ter's sake, pacified the latter, by assurances that he would continue his usual liberal allowance to his son, exhorting him to liquidate their claims by instalments. Further than this the wary father refused to go; or rather his lawyer refused for him.

Colonel Barry left London under a disagreeable feeling of disappointment. He had not found Mr. Owenson either a knave or a fool; he had only been able to raise seven thousand pounds, and he had been obliged to pay five out of that; he had not heard his son spoken of in the terms he expected at Donnington House; and, though Lady Donnington had received him with *distinguishing kindness*, he confessed that it *was* a surprise to him to find, when calling upon her a few days afterwards, that she was gone out of town for the whole remainder of the year.

In spite of self-delusion, it was too evident that he and Mrs. Barry must dismiss every expectation which depended upon this British star of fashion, and set themselves in good earnest about the

work of bringing Alicia forward, and marrying her to the first great fortune that might propose for her. That task achieved, the Colonel might come to a private composition with the people to whom he owed money; perhaps put his estates in trust for them (as many noblemen were obliged to do after a few years free living), and so live awhile upon an allowance, either on the Continent, or with their married daughter. To Marcus no regular income could now be granted; a remittance now and then must suffice, especially as he was too distant for any report of his inferior stile of living reaching England. In India he would be sure to make money, or at least to live, as the Colonel understood all East Indians did, magnificently without it:—at any rate he was out of the way, and must, for a time, be kept out of mind. By such accommodating reflections, Colonel Barry's spirits were perfectly restored before he reached his home; so that when he entered his family circle, no creature

could have suspected that he was a disappointed and nearly ruined man.

With much that had surprised and perplexed him Mrs. Barry was already informed by letter, and she might have been expected to look a little blank as well as himself, were it not for her childish habit of expecting improbabilities. Had he told her that the winds had driven Marcus back; that all his debts were paid, or his creditors dead; that Lady Sarah Mostyn's marriage was discovered to be a stage-trick, and her Ladyship going to bestow her hand upon their son in very deed; that their Jamaica estates were returning ten thousand a year when Mr. Owenson persisted in saying they no longer produced as many hundreds, Mrs. Barry would have credited it at the instant; for even romance of heart is not half so credulous as weakness of mind.

One or two female neighbours being present, Colonel and Mrs. Barry met with that well-bred indifference, which after any length of separation between the nearest connections, on their return under

any circumstances, happily prevents what are denominated *scenes* from disturbing the calm or sparkling current of present society. "How do you do, my dear?—How are you, Ally?—Well, Flo!—Ah, Scamper!" addressed to each individual of his family, with a shake of the hand for the human beings, and a pat for the four-footed companion, were all the testimonials of Colonel Barry's emotion. He whispered down Flora's eager questioning about her brother, and turned so carelessly from the deeper enquiry of Alicia's lifted eyes, that, believing she was to hear something consolatory on that subject, when their visitors should go, the latter renewed her amiable yet timid attempts at promoting cheerfulness.

All that was known to Alicia of Marcus's situation was what she had learned from her parents in the first moments of their painful surprise, and since from her mother quoting the Colonel's letters. She believed her father much displeased, and greatly disappointed that he had not

seen his son. What then was her amazement when she heard the Colonel volunteering the information of her brother's departure for India; describing it as an act dictated by himself on account of the brilliant prospects it held out to an ardent young soldier with his warmest friend at the head of the military establishment there: in short, colouring the whole affair as it seemed most advantageous to their family credit, and not inartfully hinting at the exceeding ill usage of a certain young lady of high rank, which made it doubly the Colonel's duty to get his son into scenes likely to banish useless regrets.

During this frank harangue, Colonel Barry managed to introduce parts of his single visit to Donnington House, as if adverting to different visits, by which means he established the notion he wished to impress upon his hearers, namely, that his son had been encouraged by Lady Sarah Mostyn's relations, though ill-used by herself; otherwise they would not

have paid such attention to Mr. Barry's father.

Colonel Barry had found out, during his sojourn in London, that the distinction coveted by men of doubtful degree, next to marrying a woman of rank, was that of being jilted by one; as it establishes the individual in a certain degree of fashion. He was, therefore, no longer disinclined to let it be whispered that Mr. Barry was the person chosen for Lady Sarah by Lord Harlech and Lady Donnington; Sir Lionel Colliton her own election.

Seeing his stratagem successful, by the remarks which it elicited from his credulous neighbours, the Colonel's spirits rose to their usual pitch; and Mrs. Barry listened so complacently to good-natured predictions of her son turning out a second Duke of Wellington, that Alicia confidently expected to hear some comforting particulars concerning her brother when their visitors took leave.

They were no sooner gone, than she expressed this hope, together with her

joy at her father's evident change of opinion on the subject of Marcus's exchange. The Colonel's answer astonished her afresh. He explained;—Mrs. Barry explained:—reasons were urged why one thing was said to their neighbours, and another amongst themselves. "Appearances to the world—proper concealments—indispensable evasions—falsehoods that were not falsehoods—praiseworthy discretion—commendable anxiety for family honour:"—these, and many other such phrases, were woven into their joint lecture upon expediency. In short, the whole ground-work of worldly policy was displayed before their unpractised child, teaching her that truth is not a fixed anchorage for human confidence, but a shifting sand, removable at the will of each individual for his own profit and another's loss.

Alicia was confounded: her lips faltered, but her heart did not; and, for the first time in her life, she ventured to make a firm protest against such doctrines. Mrs. Barry laughed, and called

her "dear foolish chatterer!" The Colonel, with equal hardiness of good humour, added his "Ah! you'll know better some time;" and, giving her a kiss, bade her follow Flora out of the room. Something like serious consideration of their circumstances took place between Colonel and Mrs. Barry when they were thus left together. The Colonel had but 2000*l.* out of the seven for which he had partly mortgaged Castle Barry, wherewith to pay certain importunate creditors, and to defray the current expenses of the ensuing six months: he was, however, persuaded, that before that year ended, his new agent would have put order into his affairs here, and have got more money for him from his agent in Jamaica. The question then was, as Alicia would not be eighteen before the spring of the next year, would it not be as well to defer bringing her out till after that usual period of bringing out young ladies.

Ere Mrs. Barry answered this question,

she interrogated her husband again and again on the hopeless subject of Lady Donnington. The Colonel professed sincerely to believe it a hopeless hope: but, like many other weak, vain persons, unwilling to confess the extent of a mortification, even to their second self, modified and diluted his account of Lady Donnington's indifference so much, that his lady felt sure he must have missed some excellent opening for securing her friendship for Alicia. She could not, however, refuse to admit the wisdom of keeping their girl back for a few months longer.

At this express juncture, the death of the Colonel's only near relative, an old man who left them nothing, afforded an excellent plea for not taking her to any fashionable summer resort; of course they must all go into mourning, a dress incompatible with handsome ball or promenade costumes; so that any sensible person would see how impossible it was for them to bring a daughter out when obliged to dress her so unbecom-

ingly: they might themselves, of course, take a little quiet pleasure meanwhile. Alicia could remain at home as formerly, during the six weeks of black silk and crape; and after that, if a ball or two were given at any first rate houses, ten or twenty miles off, she might be indulged in going to one, by way of rehearsing her beauty. To have some rumour of that get abroad, would rather be of use than otherwise.

Mrs. Barry thought, that taking her to the English metropolis would be a surer game than looking out for another house in Dublin: — that however would be for after consideration. This plan gave time for Colonel Barry's new agent to force an income out of the West India property for a year or two at least, and so provide them with the means of Alicia's splendid exhibition early next season.

In truth, Mrs. Barry showed an uncommon degree of cleverness in marshalling her own and her husband's movements for their especial recreation and their daughter's aggrandizement. Poor

Marcus gone to India, was gone to oblivion; "*hors de combat*," as the Colonel flippantly said, "a foolish boy!"—but, satisfied that upon some hundreds in his pocket, and the gold-teeming ground of India, he could live very well until it might suit his father to replenish his purse, he saw no use in vexing his wife and himself by more discussion of his concerns.

After this consultation, therefore, back rushed Colonel and Mrs. Barry into the frothy stream of frivolous pleasures. Present demands upon the Colonel were stopped by payments in part; and present enjoyments insured by a certain proportion of money in hand. They went hither and thither; leaving Alicia under the surveillance of Mrs. Brudenell; lamenting, in every place, the death of old Mr. Barry, which rendered change of scene necessary for the Colonel's spirits, but made it impossible for them, with any propriety, to bring their daughter regularly out for some months to come.

A falser pair than Colonel and Mrs. Barry it is clear never existed; yet they had not been so originally: they had merely been wanting in the principle of truth: occasion found them wanting, and expediency turned them into *menteurs*.

Alicia herself was very imperfectly aware of this degrading habit of her parents; nay, it was so continually exercised upon herself, that it cheated her even more than others. Mrs. Barry was instinctively acquainted with all the subjects upon which her daughter and herself would differ in principle, and therefore avoided them. She disliked contention, and she knew nothing of reasoning: she was assured that she was doing her duty as a mother; consequently, she treated Alicia as she would have humoured a baby, often silencing an anxious yet respectful remonstrance by a direct falsehood or a pitiful prevarication.

As Alicia's sorrow at her brother's departure was sincere, and for some time poignant, she felt little inclination for any amusements beyond those afforded by the

wild grounds of Castle Barry, and the valuable old library purchased by her father along with the house. In this rarely-used room she sometimes read or thought herself into fits of melancholy: for certain volumes there, were to her the spirits of absent friends; or rather like their voices, whispering back days and hours to her heart, which she could not recall without youth's passionate sorrow that those days were over.

It was not, however, of one person that Alicia thought; it was of several: of all that had sat with her under the huge walnut-tree at Mount Pleasant, or rowed her upon the lake, or roamed with her over the open country beyond. It was under the painful impression, that from some of these she was parted for ever. She fancied Mr. M^c^Manus would not live to return from Brazil; and she thought that Jocelyn Hastings's complete indifference, which his neglect manifested, would prove little less than a sort of death in him. She almost believed, that, so changed, she did not desire to see him

again. And as for her brother, gone to a dangerous climate, to a country engaged in war, with a wounded heart, and an accusing one too (for she supposed him awaking to a late sense of filial obligation), she found there were few chances of his preservation.

Only upon the idea of Mrs. Beresford, her dearly-remembered Rose M'Manus, could she rest one joyful expectation. Upon her, however, expectation did rest; and when the recollection of other beloved objects grew into pain, Alicia would rouse the fond imagination of youth, until sadness melted away into gratitude and hope.

Then it was she could expand into sweet gaiety, and, sheltered from the intrusion of visitors by her parents' absence from Castle Barry, would pass from one out-of-door employment to another; banqueting on the open air, on the sight of green or blooming things, and building short-lived bowers of roses and jessamine for some *fête* of the instant, given to her sister. Flora was every day becoming

more dear to her; for though as yet only entering her thirteenth year, the forwardness of her mind, and the intensity of her feelings, made her capable of a much wider sympathy than many young women of twenty.

While Mrs. Brudenell sat in a summer-house absorbed by the important task of stringing tiny beads into mosaic bracelets, the sisters would walk under the tall trees, gradually losing their lively sense of surrounding balm and beauty, in tender recollections of the past, or in nobler abstraction from the charms of nature, by ascending to nature's God. Thus their hearts grew into one; and the lovely temper of the elder insensibly softened the character of the younger.

But Flora was full of excessive dispositions: she could do nothing temperately. She beheld her sister's beauty with idolatrous admiration; burning to have her more seen, and telling her so with such frequency, that had not Alicia's nature made her prefer affection to admiration (therefore to set little value upon mere per-

son), her character might have been incurably injured by this imprudence. Flora's transport was unbounded when, after her mother's return from a distant excursion, she heard of a ball likely to be given by a successful candidate for the county, at which all the first people were to be present, and prevailed upon her to make Alicia go to it.

Alicia herself, who enjoyed dancing, yet was constitutionally timid, received her mother's intimation of taking her, with a mixture of pleasure and apprehension. She knew no young men except her brother and Jocelyn Hastings, and she shrunk from giving her hand, even in a dance, to a mere stranger. But the certainty that such was the ordinary course of these amusements, and the curiosity natural to youth, assisted in weakening her reluctance; so that she prepared for this her first exhibition without suspecting that it was intended to be one.

The simplest of ball-dresses (second mourning forbidding any thing gayer) formed of snow-white crape, with bou-

quets of white roses by way of decoration, was well suited to her stainless beauty and youth: she chose it for its simplicity; and Mrs. Barry sanctioned it, because dressing much at a country ball was considered bad taste.

So lovely a vision certainly never appeared before in earthly shape. Her eyes, her complexion, her angel-like hair, the exquisite forms of her head and neck, the perfection of her shape, and the grace of her step, were heightened by her look of downcast modesty, and by the innocent thankfulness with which she replied to the encouraging expressions of her mother's female acquaintance. From the moment she entered the ball-room, every other object seemed annihilated: both sexes crowded round her; and in a few minutes, ere she herself knew how it was done, her hand was pledged for dance after dance in succession, to the different men fortunate enough to know Colonel Barry, or privileged to ask a presentation to his daughter.

Mrs. Barry looked round with a giddy

sensation of being upon a pinnacle, and the whole world at her feet: she heard the universal buzz at her daughter's beauty, and she saw it heightening with her confusion.

Alicia danced, and raptures burst out afresh. She danced like a nymph, but it was like one of the huntress goddess's train. Decent grace veiled her movements, as modest drapery shaded her limbs; and even when the gay character of the music called for a more bounding step, her winged foot made no studied display by its scattering motion. She was too agitated by the murmurs swelling round, to observe how grievously many others of her sex and age were endeavouring to recall attention to themselves, by a very different mode of dancing. With scarcely a breathing interval, she got through most of the engagements made for her by her father; but as Colonel and Mrs. Barry did not wish to stale their daughter's hand to *nobodies*, after she had danced with all the few persons of consequence in the

room, they yielded to her urgent entreaty; and, declining to stay supper, allowed her to take shelter on a seat between themselves.

Alicia was positively terrified with the effect she had produced. It may not be said that it did not please her a little; but it was accompanied with such a distressing feeling of confusion, that the pain overbalanced the pleasure.

Of all men, young Irishmen are perhaps the most alive to the charm of beauty; and those who have lived wholly in their native province unbridled by the rules of refined society, are little disposed to conceal their desire to do it homage. On the present occasion, the admiration excited by Alicia Barry rose to frenzy; when it was known that she would not dance any more, and was going away before supper, a perfect tumult succeeded: the polished donor of the entertainment gracefully deprecated so cruel a departure: all who had been honoured with her hand, or had hoped to be so, joined the loud lament. — As far as her

timid glance took in, or her ear could catch a sound, she saw eagerly watchful countenances, and heard desperate or adoring exclamations; in fact, she heard herself talked of, as though every body thought her invulnerable to modest shame; even her very blushes were rapturously noticed. Her distress now became so great, and her parents were so completely satisfied of her future fame as *the* beauty, that politely waiving the new member's well-bred importunities, in despite of clamour, lamentation, reproaches, almost resistance, from some of the most hot-headed, they succeeded in getting her through the room, to their post-chariot.

She encountered new distress on the very threshold: so many ardent suitors for the honour of handing her to her father's carriage were contending round, as she clung to his arm, breathlessly hurrying out thanks and refusals, that the way was interrupted: her party were obliged to stop. At that precise moment, a young man, negligently dressed, who had just left a hack chaise with the exclamation

of "Faith, I *am* late!" ran up against Colonel Barry, and pausing to apologize, met the full blaze of Alicia's beauty. He drew back with an expression of countenance that needed no interpreter; the Colonel having seen the sorry vehicle from which the stranger had alighted, though without noticing that it had four horses, merely bowed complacently, and hurried his daughter forward; leaving the gentleman vainly imploring for the name of the vanished vision, from men who were themselves too much occupied in pursuing the admired object to give him a reply.

"Now, my dear, now you have seen what a ball is!" exultingly exclaimed Mrs. Barry, as they seated themselves, and the carriage drove off under an August full moon. "I only hope your head is not quite turned!"

"No, no, we'll hope not," assumed the sager Colonel: "Ally now knows she is pretty — remarkably pretty — and she must therefore be very guarded whom she encourages. I was very much pleased

with her way to the young men to-night: shy to them all, particular with none. The very best card possible, if a girl is pretty (a pause for a moment, then resuming,) it is always the safest for a young girl not to try at making the agreeable; her face will do every thing for her: but you are crying, Ally! What has happened?"

Mrs. Barry was all panic and enquiry, which Alicia for some time could only inarticulately allay, by repeating, with hysterical interruption, "Nothing — nothing, dear mamma! — only fluttered, frightened a little."

Her mother found something so ridiculous in this agitation, that she burst into a fit of light laughter: her father jocosely observed, that his Ally was the first woman upon record who had ever cried in good earnest because she had left a whole room full of enthusiastic Hibernians, quarrelling who should admire her most.

"We have kept her too close, Mrs. Barry," he observed. "We ought to have

taken you out before, my dear," he continued, pressing his trembling child's hand with some affection. "We should have accustomed you to see yourself admired; at least, in small neighbourly parties. I was always against the system of complete petticoat parties, and letting nobody see her face even at church. You were wrong, you see, Mrs. Barry."

"Well, well, Randal!" was the undisturbed answer, "as all is for the best, if we had not kept Ally back, she would not have made such a sensation. I heard it said all around me, that her bashfulness was full as much admired as her beauty; but, of course, you were right."

The Colonel could not do otherwise than receive this gratuitous submission with due graciousness, yet he added the rebuke, "Don't use such strong words when you speak of Ally's looks."

"Well then, her prettiness," resumed the easily-corrected wife: "however, you see I was not wrong in bringing her out at this ball, before we take her to one of the capitals. After this, Ally, don't you

think you shall know how to behave in an assembly of people of fashion? You won't cry then, my dear, will you?"

Alicia answered this highly pertinent question with the sincerity of the child she seemed to be considered. The sweet moonlight fell upon the sweeter smile of her humid eyes, as she said persuasively, "Indeed, dear mamma, I never wish to go into a large assembly again."

"And why, my love?" interrupted her astonished father.

"Because, if it is the constant practice of gentlemen, when they are doing nothing, to stare at women till they make them scarlet, and to say the grossest things loud enough for every person to hear them, they will make me so angry, after I get over my first panic, that I fear I shall say something rude to them."

Mrs. Barry fluently took up the defence of persons of fashion; and having vindicated them from intemperance of emotion upon any occasion, gravely assured Alicia that it was incumbent upon her also not to feel vividly. Believing the

time near at hand when her daughter would be carried into the vortex of pleasure, she indulged her own reminiscences by describing with peculiar *onction* the various modes of amusement, and objects for emulation, of pursuit and triumph, which the life of the world afforded. Dress, exhibition, and conquest, were evidently the graces of that life, in Mrs. Barry's estimation.

Alicia was bewildered: her mother had never spoken thoroughly out before. "Surely, surely," she cried, "I am not to *live* in balls! Dear mamma, you cannot mean that I should like such a life better than dear home life?" The deep feeling with which she pronounced the word *home*, would have told any congenial heart, what were the tranquil joys, and sacred affections, which her gentle nature embodied in that term.

Colonel Barry's turn was now come. He took up the argument on a higher ground: by demonstrating the necessity there was for every person to keep in the station they were placed in, of following

the fashions and habits of their contemporaries, affecting no singularity either in opinion or practice, he made it evident that he and Mrs. Barry were obliged to go every year to the metropolis, and to bring out their daughter exactly as others did before them. He then composedly gave a flat contradiction to his first position, by assuring Alicia, that it was a parent's duty to match their children as much above their own rank as possible; therefore, that it was her duty to keep her heart in such a state as to be able to dispose of it according to her father's wish, whenever he should decide upon the person eligible for her husband.

Alicia in vain protested against marriage for years, if ever. She could not imagine how any girl could be brought to quit her home, even for a palace, unless she loved the possessor of it beyond every object of early affection: and, at present, she felt as if even that change of feeling was not likely to happen with her.

"Sweetly natural!" exclaimed her

mother; "and so you will go on saying, of course, until the right person comes."

"No such person is findable at Castle Barry," resumed the Colonel. "None of our neighbours are at all what we wish for you, Ally: you must marry in quite a different set: and for that reason we shall take you into the best society in the winter, that you may have a number of rich and titled men to choose out of. I don't say *young* men, always, because I hope you will have too much good sense to make difference of age an objection, when every thing else is suitable: indeed, I look to you, Ally, for what your brother has disappointed me in. I don't say much about it, but I can tell you Marcus's foolish conduct has vexed every vein of my heart."

Alicia, in sorrowful surprise, questioned what he meant by so strong an expression. He was thrown off his guard, and hastily answered, that Marcus had not only spent yearly much more positive money than what his father allowed him, but had left numberless large debts be-

hind; and that, knowing himself so embarrassed, it was doubly wrong in him to let Lady Sarah Mostyn make him her dupe.

Pale and distressed, Alicia anxiously eyed her father's ruffled countenance. "Surely, dear sir," she said, "it could not be my brother's fault, that Lady Sarah used him ill. Perhaps I might be served so, if I were vain enough to expect to marry some man of rank: and don't you think that Marcus would not have spent so much money, if he had not been so fond of living with persons of greater consequence than himself?"

"Come, come, Miss Barry," interrupted the Colonel, with an air of pique, though he meant it to be playful, "don't run down our family consequence, if you please. My blood, and my rent roll, I believe, entitle my daughter to any match in the three kingdoms. And as for Marcus, since you force me to speak out, the less that's said of him the better. Between ourselves, it was gambling, and some other bad habits of the sort, that

forced him to take French leave of London, and, I dare say, lost him the heiress. No, no, it was not keeping good society, not such as he met at Donnington house."

Remembering what Jocelyn Hastings had once said of the lamentable prevalence of gaming, Alicia was going to urge the possibility of gamesters being found even amongst the friends of Lady Donnington, had not her mother broke in upon her by saying, "Pray don't be so foolish, Ally, as to go on arguing with your father. You may be sure he and I will do nothing that is not right; so you have nothing to do, but leave every thing to us, and enjoy whatever comes in your way. My dear, you are crushing that lovely bunch of roses in your hair against the side of the carriage: sit upright, dearest. I don't quite like the way you have got lately, of leaning your head so to one side:—does it look well, Colonel, or not?"

"I think I rather liked it to-night," returned the tender father; "it makes

her look what young fellows call interesting."

"Ah now, papa!" was Alicia's national and deprecatory exclamation. Her gracefully-inclined throat was immediately elevated to stately perpendicular. Cheerfuller conversation followed, till, by degrees, the Colonel dropped to sleep. Mrs. Barry then motioned herself and daughter into stillness, and closed her own eyes, leaving Alicia to gaze on the moon-silvered country; for awhile to think only of it; then to fall back upon the sad knowledge of her brother's disgrace with his father, and his serious misconduct.

Mrs. Barry did not sleep that short night for thinking of a scheme the late ball had suggested. Her imagination was heated by the dazzling effect of her daughter's first public appearance in the panoply of dress, and with something of delirious precipitancy (the mode by which emotion usually manifests itself in weak minds) she secretly wrote a long letter to Lady Donnington, reminding her Ladyship of her former prophecy,

and flattering advice; detailing the consequent manner of Alicia's conservation, and her brilliant exhibition; and praying Lady Donnington's goodness to say whether she would recommend the Colonel to take a house in London for the ensuing season, instead of in Dublin. Mrs. Barry fancied she had adroitly masked her prime motive for this application, by expressing the most unqualified admiration of Lady Donnington herself, and the most profound respect for her fashion; and by confessing that it was for the sake of enabling her child to study such a model, that she thus ventured to interest her Ladyship for the sister of one who owed all *his* advantages of society and manner to her friendship.

A very sufficient quantity of what is called puffing their family fortune, and county consequence, was incorporated with the adulation to Lady Donnington: and this letter despatched, Mrs. Barry was ready to receive and dismiss as many of Alicia's ball admirers as might choose to present themselves.

Many, indeed, rode twenty miles through August sun and dust, to "examine," as they said, "their star by daylight;" others, with more undoubting devotion, came to renew worship. One set brought new comers to introduce; another jealously came alone. Alicia was always visible. Not that Mrs. Barry had the slightest idea of throwing her daughter away upon a mere country gentleman, however rich or well born; nor even upon the younger son of a noble family; nor, perhaps, even upon a lord himself, if not gained in the field of fashion: but she had no objection to have Alicia proposed for by half the country, and so talked of now over all Ireland. And the Colonel, who began to make better worldly calculations than heretofore, being necessarily anxious to get his girl well settled, deemed it wise to hear what every man had to say for himself; so he, too, "welcomed the coming, sped the parting guest."

No one's head was more likely to be turned by this general adoration than

poor Flora's; and that, not for herself in the future, but for her sister then. She was enchanted to see Alicia beheld with something like the intense pleasure with which she contemplated her; and only felt this exultation subside, when the latter gently explained the possible evil it might produce, that of subjecting her to importunity from some man who could not merit affection, if he were excited to profess attachment by her mere person.

Alicia felt, almost without knowing what particular instance had left the lesson within her, that it is neither the face, the figure, nor the accomplishment which kindles a strong and lasting fire; that it is something of sympathy with or charm for the individual captivated: rather having reference to character and manner, than to any bodily grace whatever.

She thought of Jocelyn Hastings while saying this; and remembering how completely he had proved himself indifferent to her, even as a well wisher, sighingly owned to herself, that she would willingly

have exchanged all the beauty her kindred boasted in her, for such a character as would have obtained his friendship. At the present juncture, such remembrance of Jocelyn Hastings was unavoidable. Ten months had passed since he left Castle Barry, and nearly five since the departure of Mr. M'Manus, and now something was heard of both, in a letter from Mrs. Beresford.

Evidently ignorant of Mr. Hastings' most secret feelings, Mrs. Beresford wrote not only to announce her father's safe arrival at Rio Janeiro, and to express her own overpowering joy and thankfulness at their meeting, but to repeat, upon his authority, some details of their early friend, whom he found established at Madeira.

These details, not only described Jocelyn as performing gratuitously all the duties of his sacred profession amongst some too poor to reward, or, for a length of time, too ignorant to understand him; but patiently enduring much of irritation, misconception, and ingratitude, from the

unhappy free-thinking youth, whose early vices had brought both his body and soul to the verge of ruin, yet to whom he persevered in tenderly and firmly applying the sole remedies for both — instruction for the one, and restraint to the other.

Mr. M'Manus had been greatly affected by several scenes which he witnessed accidentally between the alternately profane and gloomy invalid, and the young guardian, wisely chosen for him by his father. He described the touching sorrows of Jocelyn, at language and sentiments which would have inflamed another's temper; and remarked, how powerful must have been the effect of the great principle he taught over his own dispositions, since he, who was once easily kindled to resentment of wrong, could be thus gentle without effort, and only sensible to concern for the offender. Mrs. Beresford added her own affectionate comments upon this gratifying improvement in the once-impetuous, and still kindly-remembered boy; assuming the fact that Alicia would join with her in

the hope and belief, that Jocelyn's Christian labours would be blessed, and that he would bring his refractory charge back to the house he had left darkened by grief and shame, worthy of entire restoration to parental love.

More moved by this revival of Jocelyn Hastings than she paused to discover, Alicia, on the third morning after the ball, begged so earnestly for a day's rest from the toil and embarrassment of helping to entertain callers of both sexes, that her mother gave her and Flora a holiday, by permitting the latter to practise her harp and drawing lessons with her sister, instead of with her governess.

Alicia had long been allowed to appropriate to herself, as a sort of sanctum, a small room on the ground-floor, which, having been used as an oratory, when the house was inhabited by catholics, was composed solely of dark wood, curiously carved on the walls with legends of saints, and on the ceiling with scripture emblems of lilies, crowns of thorns, the cross, and the keys of St. Peter.

It had one long painted window of stained glass, through which the sun shone with a mellowed and richly coloured light; and its large carved door opened upon a grassy flat, where stood a sort of font, probably used to contain holy water in ages past.

Jocelyn Hastings had assisted Alicia in obtaining the few pieces of furniture in this room, which were all of ancient make: it was therefore naturally associated with his image. She was sitting at work by a table of remote date, in a dress of such simple form that it belonged to no age or fashion, and without other ornament than her blushes and her employment (for every feminine occupation has a worthy charm in the eyes of men), when the space of the open doorway was suddenly filled by intruders. She looked up mechanically at the darkening, and saw her mother grouped with three or four gentlemen.

The confusion with which both sisters rose from their different avocations gave token of its genuineness by the colour in

their cheeks. Their mother's shallow artifice of exclaiming, "O, you are here, are you? I did not think your master was gone!" could not hide from her children the trick of thus bringing her company to see the chapel-room.

The party, for whom Mrs. Barry *had* employed this stratagem, were certainly the *élite* of their neighbourhood. Two younger sons and one nephew of a great Earl, with whom the Barrys had no previous acquaintance, and who now came, upon the strength of the memorable night's introduction, to ask after their fair partner, and to present Lord St. Lawrence.

This last-mentioned personage proved to be the hack-chaise gentleman, of whom Colonel and Mrs. Barry made such small account when they encountered him in quitting the ball, and who now conducted himself with elegant propriety. While his under-bred, though highly-born companions, kept staring down the modest and lovely eyes they professed already to adore, he walked leisurely about the

rooms, examining the exquisite workmanship of the Gothic tracery and foliated rafters of the coved roof, addressing a remark now and then to his companions, which none of them seemed to understand.

Flora being full of information above her years, deep in antiquity from taste and reading, and being also at that age when forward intellect is often eager for display, could not resist the temptation of showing the young nobleman that his observations were appreciated by somebody present. Alicia's ear was seized by one of the Mr. Donovan's pretending to criticise her sewing and hemming. Mrs. Barry was talking of her girls' accomplishments to the others, so that Flora easily obtained attention, and pleased attention, from her oracle. But even Flora could not fail to note that his eye often turned and took in a long draught of the vivid blushes and downcast looks of Alicia, as she sat timidly endeavouring not to comprehend the insinuated compliments addressed to her.

The entrance of Colonel Barry, who had not been in the house when this party arrived, necessarily drew off attention for awhile to himself, during which Alicia had time to recover; and the universal blush, which her mother's petty stratagem had made at once visible through the lawn covering her neck and arms, gradually subsiding, left her spotless complexion in greater lustre than when seen under the imperfect light of lamps.

Colonel Barry was, of course, complimented upon his house and grounds by his visitors, and required by Lord St. Lawrence to give the history of some heraldic coats of arms in the painted window. He was not unskilful in his way of laughing off his ignorance; and the enquirer, perhaps, guessing at the true cause of his affected unwillingness to hear his own family consequence honoured, returned to courteous notice of the little girl watching his discourse.

First, the book Flora had been reading aloud was animatedly discussed, and

then the sketch she had been making was looked at. The book was a volume of Sismondi's Italian Republics, — that history more deeply interesting than romance itself; and the drawing was a sketch of the old stone font, with its clothing of dark ivies, and its back-ground of finely grouped trees.

Lord St. Lawrence commended her choice of a subject, mixing his encouraging remarks with some useful hints; and as Flora audibly regretted her inability to put in figures, he took her pencil and slightly sketched in her own. This amusing, harmless gallantry, and the likeness it bore to the air of the young face and form thus copied, attracted Alicia's attention. While she was tracing with fond eagerness the resemblance found there, and rather thanking Lord St. Lawrence by her eyes than with her tongue, Flora's whole countenance sparkled: she ventured to ask whether the noble artist would just sketch her sister too.

The stifled "Impossible!" of his Lord-

ship as he bent to the ear of Flora, and raised his head with a heightened colour, was not lost upon Mrs. Barry; she was joyously scanning his look of fashion, his probable immense fortune, and his acknowledged rank, when she heard one of the party telling her husband that the young peer was obliged to be at Windsor by a certain day, at the installation of a Knight of the Bath.

Mrs. Barry's disappointment was so apparent, that two of the Mr. Donovans laughed at the same moment, though monopolizing Miss Barry, by praying her to be very good-natured and make them enemies for life, by bestowing a flower upon one. The Colonel, wishing to obtain consideration from his illustrious guest, was beginning a speech, in which he took it for granted that Lord St. Lawrence was well acquainted with Lady Donnington, when the eldest of the young honourables interposed with "No — no — St. Lawrence is one of the Azorinski-ites."

Mrs. Barry was reduced to the morti-

fying necessity of asking what that meant? Mr. Donovan, with cool incivility, answered the mother's question to the daughter. — "O, he toadies the Polish woman; and she and Lady Donnington are cats and mice to each other—natural enemies, as that clever pretty girl, Emily Bristo, says. Nobody goes to both houses. I know I only went one night to the horrible foreigner's this spring, and Lady Donnington positively refused me my last set at Almack's for the high crime. I suppose she will leave me out of her *petits soupers* at Brighton next winter. What a bore, Miss Barry! Isn't it a bore?"

Alicia, shrinking away from the speaker, simply replied, that she was quite a novice in such matters, therefore could not answer him: but her younger and severer-judging sister darted a look of uncontrolled contempt; which, intercepting, Lord St. Lawrence smiled, and, vindicating the Polish Lady's right to admiration, instead of resenting the cavalier charge made against himself, brought

on a complete skirmish of assertion and denial between him and Mr. George Donovan.

When Mrs. Barry heard that the lady in question was married and excessively plain, and that Lord St. Lawrence had known her and her husband on the Continent ere she came to England, her drooping hopes were up and full blown again. They were brightened anew as the English peer gracefully enquired whether he might hope for the pleasure of meeting Colonel Barry's family in London the ensuing season, where he would promise his young acquaintance (meaning Flora) the sight of some tolerable pictures.

Neither Colonel nor Mrs. Barry had heard of the Earl's gallery, so they lost an admirable opportunity of saying flattering things; and none of the Mr. Donovans had the good nature or mischief to prompt them. The Colonel affected indifference while saying it was uncertain whether he should indulge himself with a tour on the Continent for a year

or two, or Mrs. Barry with a season of good music in the English capital. Poor Mrs. Barry, who did not know Bartleman's voice from Pasta's!

The gentlemen's horses were twice announced, and once countermanded after they had been rung for, ere they departed. The Mr. Donovans did not go until they had secured a future entrance at Castle Barry, by making sundry engagements with the Colonel; and Lord St. Lawrence, by his momentarily fixed eyes as he bowed to Alicia, seemed determined to carry away an accurate remembrance of her features, — such a remembrance as Mrs. Barry believed, and the Colonel hoped, would lead to important results.

After this morning, Castle Barry, for some weeks, was never rid of idlers and admirers, and female friends and female critics. Mrs. Barry spent half her time in answering notes of entreaty, of remonstrance, of irresistible importunity; in managing to keep off some proposals, and to bring forward others;

in thinking what Alicia looked best in, and where it was best to take her; and in wishing and waiting, and fretting for the letter from Lady Donnington, which never came. A galley-slave at the oar has an easier existence. O the misery of having a beauty to dispose of, determining not to part with her under the highest price!

Colonel Barry had his full share of this pleasing torment: his office was to reject his daughter's suitors. To reject was easy, as scarcely any of them had the substantial ground for proposing. All were ready to take Miss Barry without a shilling; but as, upon examination, those who said so were not possessed of many shillings themselves, the ardour of their passion went for nothing with the father.

Precipitate suitors are generally poor ones: so the few, whose large estates, or baronetcies in immediate prospect, were full as tempting to Colonel Barry for his child as the high-sounding titles his early desires had fixed on, seemed desirous of being permitted to learn the

disposition and habits of *la belle Alice*, ere they committed themselves in regular words. For such, dinners were to be given; little excursions taken in social intimacy; new channels were consequently opened, through which Colonel Barry's scanty supplies flowed rapidly away, without the remotest prospect of replenishment. Frequent consultations began to take place between the blinded pair. Mrs. Barry, though she kept her own secret about Lady Donnington's neglect of her humiliating letter, owned that Lady Donnington's conduct quite astonished her. Such strange forgetfulness of them all! Such a want of interest in poor Marcus, who was once her heaven above! But it was *the world*.— Lady Donnington would be perfection if she did not live in *the horrid world*. And if Lord St. Lawrence had not been going direct into *the world*, after he was so struck with Alicia, he *must* have come back, and proposed for her. In the same breath, Mrs. Barry denounced the bare idea of marrying her girl to any of

the Waterford men, and letting her vegetate *out of the world.*

After a few weeks of inward mortification, the Colonel, assuming indifference, assured his lady that he was not sorry Lord St. Lawrence had not revisited Ireland, for he heard from his friends, the Mr. Donovans, that he was not a marrying man, and had not spent several years on the Continent without contracting some of its vices.

Mrs. Barry was always inclined to receive comfort; and nothing could be more consoling than hearing a bad character of the man who would not come and marry her daughter. Neither she nor the Colonel chose to suspect the accuracy of the information: coming, as it did, from three young men, remarkably ill-looking, remarkably disagreeable, remarkably self-conceited; too poor to think of marrying Alicia Barry; and too unpleasant, for her to give them the slightest ground of fancying their dawdling admiration acceptable. More serious affairs, however, than unmeaning gallantry were

now fast approaching their crisis. Four months after Colonel Barry's visit to England, he received a letter from his agent in Jamaica, telling him of the total failure of the speculation into which the Colonel had entered, upon the application of a scheming experimentalist lately gone out to these islands. Various additional losses were stated, in consequence of a great mortality amongst the Negroes, and the agent's incapacity to replace them, for want of proper funds. References were given to the accounts of different persons claiming interest upon the estates, and urged as reasons why their owner could not expect remittances over at a later period, unless he could find some mode of disburthening the property of such demands from mortgage-holders; or of dismembering it for sale.

The agent either wished, or feigned to wish, that his employer would cross the Atlantic, and take the evidence of his own senses as to the ruinous circumstances he described; giving it as his opi-

nion, that unless instant steps were taken, the whole concern must come to a final stop.

Colonel Barry was now absolutely forced to think of this disagreeable voyage. He had bills out, for the due honouring of which he was totally unprovided; the debts to tradesmen were enormous: it was evident that he could neither go on at Castle Barry, nor take a house in either capital, nor even go upon the continent with his family, without a large and regular supply. There was nothing for him but complying with his agent's request, making a trip to Jamaica, and sending his wife and daughters abroad. They might go to France, and live *en pension* at a convent, ostensibly for the sake of perfecting them in the French accent, but in reality to keep Alicia back, and his bills from increasing, until his prosperous return; for prosperous the Colonel intended it should be, if he sold every foot of ground he possessed beyond the Atlantic.

By this arrangement, an axe was laid

to the very root of all Mrs. Barry's joys. O the misery of such a living death as that of a convent to a woman who lived only in crowded assemblies, and milliners' show-rooms! who never opened a book of higher value than a modish album! who was counting every minute between the present hour, and that in which she hoped to see her daughter a peeress!

Necessity, however, is imperious. So Mrs. Barry, with floods of tears, was obliged to admit that, since no money was to be got, her husband must go to Jamaica and she to France with an Irish family of some consequence, who were taking a younger daughter there, to place in a celebrated school for the same purpose which the Barrys meant to feign induced them to send their daughters. Sir Luke Ponsonby's family were then at Brighton, whence they were to cross for Dieppe: to Brighton, therefore, it was agreed Mrs. Barry should convey her girls.

This scheme, suddenly decided upon, was as suddenly communicated to Alicia.

It certainly startled her: but when she heard that her mother meant to live in the deepest retirement whilst abroad, going solely for the double motive of accomplishing her daughters to the utmost, and avoiding the necessity of having company for the period of her husband's absence:—above all, when she saw the profuse tears with which Mrs. Barry spoke of four months' separation from him, Alicia felt a sort of joyful tenderness at her mother's unexpected sensibility, which banished all thought of self.

Nothing was said by these unwise parents, beyond a vague mention of difficulty about getting remittances duly sent; trouble with agents; desire of seeing what improvement the estates were capable of, &c.: yet Alicia's natural intellect made her perceive that something was not right in her father's affairs, or he would not tempt a dangerous climate; and she said so with equal tenderness and respect; she even sought to dissuade him from going to an island which she knew of only as the grave of Europeans.

How many of the pretty Irish girls had she, in her short life, seen go out, the happy wives of young healthy soldiers, and return widowed, or their orphan babes brought home to be fed on charity! Many such were amongst her early cares. There had ever been something so abhorrent to her best feelings in the notion of West India property, that she felt inclined to believe no blessing could rest upon it; and often when some new circumstance or story pressed that feeling more closely upon her and Flora, they were tempted to refuse every luxury purchased by fortune thus obtained. At the present moment she had a superstitious dread of the voyage for her father, yet she presumed not to say why; her father's opinions being openly of a very different complexion.

The Colonel made light of such apprehensions, talking as soldiers of common character do of the chances of battle with moral ignorance and indifference; parading a proud consciousness of security, on the plea of being in the path of duty. As

if the man who has brought himself into a strait by criminal wastefulness dare challenge the protection of God to bring him through it! Or he who performs an action of his own free will, by which he hopes to obtain the greatest advantage, may vaunt it as a thing done solely for the good of those, who, being inseparably connected with him, cannot help sharing his loss or gain! The Colonel had his reasons, to which his Lady was privy, why preparations were to be made quietly and secretly; and why he should accompany his family a small part of the way to the port where they were to cross to Milford Haven; then quit them, and turn back to Cork, his place of embarkation.

Mrs. Brudenell was previously sent to Dublin on some specious errand, and there sent her *congée* by letter, with a flattering apology for the abrupt dismissal, and a small *douceur* over her next half year's salary, by way of compensation. All the dear silent neighbourhood of Alicia's home; its trees, waters, and grassy walks;

its old grey church, and popish well; the beloved garden at Mount Pleasant, and the neat cabins built by Mr. M'Manus on a reclaimed waste beyond, together with every turf-cutter and potatoe-setter in and about Castle Barry, were visited, and wept, and blessed, and lingered over, in hard silence by herself and Flora.

They were forbidden to say that they were going away; and when both their kind young hearts fancied the many wants which would be unrelieved while they were absent, and how often such and such a poor creature would wish "somebody to tell their grievances to," no wonder the pang was keener felt, than when solely for themselves!

They were spared, however, the bitterness of witnessing their dependents' grief; and clamorous though it be, the grief of the Irish peasantry is sincere and affecting. Flora rejoiced that no one knew they were going; since she could now remember her nurse's face and old Dennis's with their habitual smiles: Alicia inwardly thought that such unconscious-

ness was as heart-piercing to look on as the sports of the animal we know destined for immediate death.

In early youth any separation, however short, seems for an eternity: even the gentlest nature is impatient at that first period, under a momentary check of long-indulged pleasures. We must have loved and lost again and again, possessed and parted from objects of the tenderest affection, (O how often!) ere we are brought to see that there is as much vanity in expecting everlasting life in a world where we know our existence has its appointed term, as in looking for a continuance of that happiness, which we are told is not to be given us here.

And if we stopped at this conviction, who might abide its chilling influence? Thanks be to God, such a conviction is generally the star of a brighter hope and a surer expectation; and when that arises upon our hearts, this brief passage of life, though it may be strewed with many a scattered joy, is beheld without dismay, and trod in joyful security.

In saying farewell to the familiar scenes and domestic friends of her childhood, Alicia Barry concluded she had gone through the extremity of present suffering; for, though a foreign land was before her, she was to go there with her mother and sister; and youthful imagination already gave cheerfulness to the prospect: trusting, as she did, that nothing, meanwhile, would befall her distant father and brother. How, then, was she dismayed, when, out of sight of Castle Barry, she was shown a letter from Lady Donnington, (arrived that morning), shortly but strenuously urging Colonel and Mrs. Barry to send their eldest daughter over to her, on "a visit of ages!"

Lady Donnington was then at Brighton, where she said she meant to winter, provided Miss Barry and she found it agreeable, or the latter did not play her the probable trick of marrying directly; if not, they would go over to Paris, or make a flight to Edinburgh; after which, they would be back in London for any possible pleasant thing. Mrs. Barry

might then claim her daughter, whenever Miss Barry got tired, or her parents tired of being without her.

Not a word was said of Marcus; not a reference made to Mrs. Barry's secret application (Mrs. Barry, of course, thought it had miscarried); not a remark offered upon the probable developement of Alicia's beauty; except, indeed, in the prophecy of her speedy marriage; not a doubt admitted of the Barry family's eager acceptance of this sudden overture.

Had Alicia been fully informed, either of Lady Donnington's character, or particular line of conduct towards her parents, she certainly would have gone nearer to rebellion, in attempting to ward off a threatened fate, than she had ever before done; but she knew Lady Donnington only as her brother's idolatry described her, and as her mother's veneration for her fashion implied; and she therefore limited her resistance to the tearful assurance that she could have no pleasure in gay society when separated from her mother and sister, and anxious

for her father; nay, that she would be distressed by living amongst persons, with many of whom her poor brother had unthinkingly gone into expenses so displeasing to his parents.

Colonel Barry prayed her not to perplex him with reasons against a plan to which he had just given his concurrence; for he had other things to think of at that moment. However, he certainly thought it his duty not to lose such an opportunity of having her introduced to the highest circles by the very highest woman of fashion; and that she must therefore make up her mind to follow Lady Donnington's advice and example in every thing; and be guided by her entirely, while under such distinguished protection.

Mrs. Barry, with her ordinary levity, talked rapturously on the present occasion. With her this event was *a providence*, and Lady Donnington the best of women. She declared herself at the summit of her wishes; foreseeing from this unexpected letter exactly such a des-

tiny for Alicia as a good fairy might have conferred, had such a gifted personage assisted at the infant's birth.

Flora half-joyfully expressed a hope "that Alicia might meet with that agreeable English Earl who came with the Mr. Donovans, and was so kind to her; his good-nature and his drawing put her so in mind of dear Mr. Hastings!" Then recollecting that she and her sister would be separated, she changed her tone, and bewailed their useless separation.

Mrs. Barry assured Flora that she was too young to comprehend all the advantages of such an introduction into life, but that Alicia must be aware of them; and if not now, a few short weeks, perhaps, would most agreeably enlighten her.

Alicia's cheeks became crimson, and her heart sunk with instant sense of her mother's meaning. Marriage had already been talked of to her, and the essentials required by her parents accurately stated; but as they had already refused matches which her humility thought, in a worldly

view, fully equal to her pretensions, and as they never led her to suppose she would be urged into accepting any man she did not like, she bounded her concern to regret at the probability of disappointing their wish, by preferring an unfettered life to the most splendid chain ever bestowed by Hymen.

As despatch was a matter of moment to Colonel Barry, for reasons he would not let his children know, though our readers may guess at them, he parted from his wife and daughters at the first post-house, and, throwing himself into a chaise, took the nearest way to Cork, where he had already secured a passage in a West Indiaman, bound for Jamaica.

A packet for Milford Haven sailed half an hour after Mrs. Barry got to Waterford. It carried them safely across the Channel to the opposite coast; where, immediately on landing, the mother and daughters, accompanied by one maid and a serviceable man-servant, resumed land-travelling, and posted, with little delay, to Brighton.

Although Mrs. Barry professed to believe she was going to settle herself and Flora for four or five months in a dull French province, during this journey she secretly indulged an expectation that Lady Donnington would invite her to spend part of that time with her; and when she got to Brighton, other views opened upon her. She had not left her husband's side a week, ere she forgot every thing he had said about the necessity of making the most of the few hundred pounds left for her in a banker's hand; giving willing ear to the Irish family she joined at the Steyne Hotel, when they talked of her accompanying them to Paris, instead of stupifying in a province.

A girl of Flora's age was not likely to offer any opposition to such a tempting plan; and Alicia was yet too much under the influence of habitual obedience, nay, too ignorant of their real situation, to venture an enquiry into the prudence of such a measure. The chief conquest she achieved over her mother was, getting

her to refrain from announcing their arrival to Lady Donnington the evening of their coming. She prayed for one quiet night, ere she must rouse her spirits to encounter that Lady Donnington, of whom she had no recollection, except of having been exceedingly abashed by her.

Early the next morning a notification of Mrs. Barry's arrival, *on her way to France*, was sent to Lady Donnington, with an obliged acceptance of her Ladyship's flattering invitation for her daughter; who, of course, was said to be originally intended for the Continent, with her mother. After skimming Mrs. Barry's note, Lady Donnington was scrawling the single authoritative line of "Do bring Miss Barry to me directly, dear madam!" when, recollecting that it would be as well to reconnoitre her young guest ere she admitted her, undisciplined, she got into the chair that was waiting to carry her to a bath, ordering it to the Steyne Hotel.

Expecting a visit, or a summons to visit, Mrs. Barry was ready for either, in the most fashionable morning costume of

Dublin-Parisian taste. Alicia was over-dressed, sorely against her inclination, which ever pointed to simplicity; and the last fashion having been one of a very fantastic character, became when excessive absolutely theatrical; so that, in a spreading gauze hat, strewed over, as it were, with little bunches of transparent Genoa flowers, and in a sea-green pelisse, all in a flutter with tassels and trimmings, this modestly-lovely girl looked what Lady Donnington accused her of intending to be, "a fancy-ball *Perdita*."

But matchless beauty is supreme over the ridiculous; and as Alicia's eyes fell, and her young cheek coloured at so ungentle a salutation, even the woman of the world felt she was rather a victim than a doll; and she followed up her first exclamation, by observing how much Miss Barry's appearance was improved.

Mrs. Barry poured forth such a tide of compliments, and acknowledgments, and anticipations of delight for her daughter, from Lady Donnington's *distinguishing, unmerited kindness*, that Alicia was first

painfully humiliated by them, then roused to struggle for the family dignity, and so to notice their titled friend's somewhat unceremonious mode of pronouncing her admiration.

As the artless novice frankly requested indulgence from utter ignorance of society, and smilingly expressed an apprehension that not even Lady Donnington would be able to overcome her unapt nature, so as to fit her for becoming generally agreeable; her Ladyship eyed her in silent speculation, then, having made up her mind as to the character she was about to attempt managing, she turned, and addressed Mrs. Barry. "Now you must know, my dear madam, that until this moment, I never have undertaken any young lady; so I do not profess to invite Miss Barry to a school (with a tincture of sarcasm in the emphasis upon that word): if she thinks there is any thing in me worth copying, she must learn it by her own study and genius. I teach nothing, positively nothing: witness my two precious nieces. Thank Heaven, I never interfered with their education: —

of course, you have heard of Lady Sarah's marriage with that revolutionary general at Naples?"

Mrs. Barry expressed unfeigned astonishment, and might have said something of condolence too, had not Lady Donnington gone on with as much indifference as though she had spoken of a stranger's disgrace, "Now I wish you to understand, that I have asked Miss Barry to visit me, merely that I may take her about a little, and let her see and be seen; but I wish her to understand also, that if she is to be with me, she must allow me to judge for her upon occasions, where she can know nothing of herself. She must be so good as take my word for every thing; since I see, by that unhappy hat at twelve o'clock at noon, that she must not be trusted with dressing herself; that is, you must get rid of her maid, and leave me to find her one. With regard to her intimacies, there, too, I must have entire command. I never could bear little sets, and young ladies coming every day to one another to tell secrets:—

nothing is so missy! In short, clicks are odious to me."

Lady Donnington paused to draw breath. Mrs. Barry was all gratitude and submission; — both her daughters looked dismayed. Her ladyship resumed.

"One thing I must, at the outset, warn Miss Barry against, — flirting, which is detestable to me, on account of its very bad taste; it is the worst taste possible in a very young woman, especially if she is prettier than common; and the worst policy if she wishes to marry. Men never think seriously of a girl that is called entertaining; they either suspect her of being blue, or they fear she will make her husband orange."

As not even the younger part of her company apprehended this figurative term for jealousy, the elegant speaker concluded them all, "Poor creatures!" however, Alicia, she saw, was outwardly a thing of "light, splendour, and joy," and that was the whole scope of Lady Donnington's cares upon the present occasion.

Alicia, however, did not suffer her to

continue long under the impression that she was a "poor creature." She entered her protest against flirting with such maidenly spirit, that her Ladyship hastily deprecated the idea of her being a Methodist. Mrs. Barry hastened to disavow "such a character for a child of hers." Alicia, struck with the absurd contrast of Methodism and gaudy apparel, just touched her flaring hat, and yielded to an irrepressible burst of laughter. Lady Donnington caught the jest, and, her own features relaxing, she congratulated her young acquaintance upon having at least one qualification for the world,—a lively sense of the ridiculous. She then interrogated Mrs. Barry upon her daughter's tastes and talents.

Mrs. Barry eagerly named dancing first. Lady Donnington was delighted; dancing was one of the best things, she said, for a young lady to do well. No one was ever known to dance with ballet dancers, but many were terribly in the habit of singing with their masters, by way of society; and, indeed, if once young

ladies got a rage for being great musicians, there was no guarding against the immense number of bad acquaintances which such a passion brought round them.

After this, other branches of female acquirement, and other points of female opinion were questioned; the catechising ending by the complete surrender of Alicia, body and soul, into the hands of Lady Donnington; a woman, of whom this inconsiderate mother only knew, that she was of the highest fashion, but had not a single pledge for her having one principle of moral good, much less of religious principle within her. Yet did Mrs. Barry believe she was actuated by the purest desire of her child's good. Simple was the touchstone that would have roused conscience, and elicited truth, had she resorted to it. Had she asked herself whether she would gladly exchange her present brilliant chimeras for her daughter's willing union with a man of high principle and easy fortune, and answered in the affirmative, then she

might have believed herself influenced by no selfish ambition.

Lady Donnington, in the same business-like tone with which she had hitherto pursued conversation, asked Mrs. Barry when she went to France; observed how uncomfortable she must be at an hotel; complained of being "in the street" herself, because living in a ready-furnished house, while one lately built and left her by a relation was refitting for her reception; and, upon hearing Mrs. Barry meant to cross to Dieppe in a day or two, rejoined, "By way of being civil, I will confess I am not sorry to hear you are not going to stay for the Brighton winter; I so dislike interference! If I bring Miss Barry out, I bring her out:—and with a mamma next door, I know girls are very unmanageable: there is always some pet acquaintance, or pet gown to beg off. Miss Barry, I must have that fine hat burnt: we are all nuns here (touching her own blonde veil): when you come to me, my maid shall look over your *trousseau* (for want of a word), and see what

you want. I hope Colonel Barry means to be very magnificent, Mrs. Barry: there is no doing any thing without quantities of money."

Alicia tried to interpose a vehement rejection of any mode of life which required such demands upon her father; and the name of her brother was actually trembling on her lips, when her mother cheerfully declared that Colonel Barry would leave his daughter's expenditure entirely under her Ladyship's regulation: following this up by some extravagant compliment, which, as she was not a native of Ireland, was sadly deficient in the national characteristic of such eulogiums, grace and gaiety.

Lady Donnington, however, accepted the incense without regarding it; then proceeded to say, she was going to her country house in Berkshire, until her new Brighton residence was completed; when she should return to open it with a select evening party, for which her cards were already issued. During their seclusion at Birkham, Miss Barry might spend

whole days in practising quadrille steps and sol fa's; or in *reading up* to the people left behind them; or in making odious paper and card things for the charity sale at the Ladies' Society room. In short, as Lady Donnington never admitted a soul, except her steward, and lawyer, and grazier, when she went on business to Birkham, Miss Barry would have all the day from seven to seven to herself; that is, if she chose to rise so early, and could dine so late.

This proposal met with a third burst of grateful acquiescence from Mrs. Barry, though not so sincere a one as its predecessors; for she did not relish such delay of Alicia's appearance. Alicia herself expressed unfeigned pleasure in seeing more of England, the beauty of which had often cheated both her and Flora of many a painful thought, while travelling from Milford Haven; and her submission was followed by another revelation of Lady Donnington's will.

"It would be too cruel to take your daughter from you this last day, so I

shall not ask her to go with me to Lady Tottenham's to-night; only let her be ready for me and my travelling carriage to-morrow, directly after breakfast: but stay (as she herself was rising from her seat); I have a great mind to take her with me to see my new house. I am now going to the bath. I will come back for her."

Lady Donnington applied her hand to the bell as she spoke, while Alicia's reluctant eyes and her mother's ready tongue asked when she should be ready?

"Oh! I forgot!—two o'clock, if you please, Miss Barry; and without that hat."

Alicia with gentle dignity and a gentler blush removed the hat from her head, leaving her head, hair, and throat in unshaded beauty. Lady Donnington was actually dazzled; but quickly recovering, with such an expression of visible pleasure in her looks that it cheated even Flora into thinking it amiable, resumed, "Only throw a square of black lace over a cap and that hair, and put off your

smart pelisse for any thing dark, and you will be quite correct. Good morning, Mrs. Barry; I wish you all sorts of pleasant things in Paris! O, that is your other daughter! She looks *spirituelle*, but not like her sister. (Flora's quick sense caught the full meaning of the pause and the remark, and both her face and her heart burnt.) Two o'clock, Miss Barry.— I hope your brother likes India. — Good morning." Without staying for reply to the last question, or any other, Lady Donnington with a sweeping bend of her head, and replacing her eye-glass in her belt, quitted the room.

Mrs. Barry certainly did not expect her *congée* to be given so unceremoniously: she had buoyed herself up with the hope of being invited to witness Alicia's first public exhibition, or to be asked for a few days to Birkham, or at least to be favoured with this last evening in private at Lady Donnington's; but her Ladyship's manner was decisive: and even the most obtuse could not help feeling that Lady Donnington would not bear

the slightest appearance of dictation or appropriation,—(she, that dictated to, and made use of, every creature within her reach!)—much less the smallest effort at intruding upon her society.

Mrs. Barry confusedly saw this, yet would not allow it, when Alicia, after their visitor's departure, expressed some distaste of much which Lady Donnington had said; remarking, with a daughter's commendable jealousy for a parent's respectability, upon the strange omission of an invitation of some sort to her mother: she wondered, too, that but one parting question had been made about her brother.

To this Mrs. Barry replied, that both omissions were easily accounted for. Lady Donnington could not do more than mention Marcus, unless she reverted to the *cause* which had driven him from England; and that could not be expected from her as aunt to Lady Sarah Mostyn. And she had not asked Mrs. Barry to Birkham, because the latter had herself foolishly said, she was going immediately

to France. Nay, that evening Lady Donnington spoke of having an engagement.

Alicia thought that some regret might have been expressed by Lady Donnington upon the occasion; and having frankly declared this opinion, she ceased from urging it, remaining herself under the disagreeable impression that Lady Donnington appeared to think far too much of the distance between the ranks of a peeress and the wife of a gentleman: nay, that her Ladyship erroneously imagined, that high rank absolved individuals from obedience to the general law of society. Mrs. Barry did not allow either herself or her daughter to question the matter further: her own arrangements were to be made for a speedy transfer to France, since destined to accompany Sir Luke Ponsonby's family; and Alicia was to be re-dressed: and the muster of a wardrobe got down from Dublin at a shameful expense, just as the latest fashions were going out, was to be made before every competent person of their suite.

While her maid, and two good-humoured Miss Ponsonbys were occupied in this momentous review with Mrs. Barry, Flora offered to assist her sister in changing her pelisse; and going with her into their chamber, gave vent to her suppressed feelings in a perfect torrent of vexation and mourning. She professed to have taken a perfect antipathy to Lady Donnington. She wondered her mamma did not see how insolently they were all put by, and ordered to do this, and that, like so many slaves. She wondered how Alicia could submit to be made such a doll of; for it was plain, from what Lady Donnington said, that she never might choose even the gown she was to wear, nor the people she might like, nor the places she was to go to:—it was hard, very hard, that Flora was to be forced to give up her sister for such a stranger; who did not seem to care whether the poor little girl in the corner were sad or indifferent at the separation. Lady Donnington might have left them the whole last day of Alicia's society; in truth, altogether,

Flora could not imagine what could make such a person as this fine lady want Alicia to stay with her.

The riddle was indeed inexplicable to a natural-hearted girl not thirteen; and, from Alicia's low estimation of personal attractions, as much beyond her power of guessing at: but in respect to her mother's avowed opinions, she strove to soften Flora's intemperate judgment of their new acquaintance, by stating, that the latter could have no other motive than to do a kindness when she thus invited an inexperienced, therefore awkward girl, to pass a whole season under her roof.

Flora persisted in asking what good Alicia was to obtain from such an introduction. Nothing, she thought, except being taken about to balls and parties and operas, and being admired. All that might be very charming and very delightful, Flora *dare say'd*, provided the person that took her sister about did not domineer over her, and make it such a monstrous favour. Nay, there was nothing

on earth Flora desired more than to see her sister admired: but for all that, she would not accept such a gratification at the cost of proper pride.

With her whole sweet nature in the pressure she gave her sister against her heart, Alicia tenderly endeavoured to correct Flora's somewhat selfish sensibility, and to soften the expression of otherwise right feeling. She playfully assured her sister, that she believed they ought rather to thank Lady Donnington for intending to over-rule a young companion's will in unimportant matters, than for giving her so many chances of being admired; the one being likely to do a person some good, the other being sure to do them much harm. She insisted that it was the duty both of herself and Flora to bend their inclinations to those of their mother, when she did not urge them to any thing forbidden by that higher Parent, whose commands Mr. Hastings had taught them always to obey first. In the present instance, perhaps neither of them knew their mother's reasons for what

seemed to them rather lowering to family respectability: or perhaps they were both too young to understand them if told. At any rate, Flora must allow she was not yet of an age to question any wish of her mother's; and Alicia felt, that after having more than once respectfully urged her great desire of going as little into the crowded world as possible, and having been told she must not be so gratified, it was *her* duty to submit without murmuring. Was not the present, one of the seasons of which Mr. Hastings had sometimes told them, when they would first be called to give up their own wishes, and then be tasked to resist the temptations of the new situations imposed upon them? Very different indeed would be their trials during separation: Alicia was in danger of being led away by acquiring a great appetite for pleasure; and Flora, from her probable settlement at a foreign seminary, would be liable to encourage the spirit of repining: thus both must strive against their characters and their circumstances.

Somewhat nettled by the allusion to her age of unquestioning submission, Flora replied with some heat, that nothing, then, should make *her* do what she thought debasing, when she came to Alicia's time of life. And, following up this violence with more sentiments of the same nature, worked himself into a sort of transport; during which she accused the sister she really thought incapable of such unkindness, of caring little for her future comfort.

Alicia's silent tears only replied to this grievous burst of temper, while inwardly deploring that she was, indeed, to separate from a sister whom she loved too fondly not to wish weeded of every disposition hateful to God and man; and for whom she dreaded the pernicious effect of foreign flatteries, and the uncontrolled habit of thinking her own intellect superior to those around her. Her eyes were still streaming, when Lady Donnington's carriage drove up to the door of the hotel. One sister rushed from their bed-room, as if the object of

her aversion were likely to mount up there; and the other, hastily drying her eyes, as many have done before, ere they went from real sorrow to false joy, hurried to show herself for an instant to her mother.

"Don't keep Lady Donnington waiting, my love!" exclaimed Mrs. Barry, in a fuss of eagerness, as Alicia opened the door, "I like you, above all things, in that veil. Get away! get away!"

Alicia's quick movements being only to prevent notice of her reddened eyes, she turned from the room with a step as heavy as her heart.

Lady Donnington, who sat alone in an open barouche, had full leisure to observe her young protegée's air, as the latter walked forwards to the entrance of the hotel; and to scan her dress while the step of the carriage was letting down.

Quite satisfied with her appearance, therefore in high good humour, she exclaimed, as Alicia seated herself, and replied to the bow of her mother's old footman by a smile, "Nothing can be

better than this pretty mob and Chantilly veil. That *poussière des ruines* is quite refreshing too, after your gay green pelisse. O, by the way, Miss Barry, we cannot do without a man servant for you. If Mrs. Barry has one to spare, pray tell her to leave him."

Alicia was astonished. "What could she want with a man servant?" burst instinctively from her lips. Lady Donnington soon demonstrated, that unless Miss Barry meant to usurp the time and command of one of Lady Donnington's ten or twelve liveried loungers, she must have a male domestic of her own to attend her and her maid whenever she wanted to go out alone to shops or baths, and to carry notes, execute commissions, &c. In short, it was the style Lady Donnington chose a young lady to appear in when under her protection; and Alicia, too eager to seize any opportunity of avoiding fresh trammels of obligation, with some of her sister's throbbing pride, said, she was sure her mamma would do by her whatever was thought proper for

the daughter of a gentleman. Lady Donnington having done with that subject, abruptly hoped Miss Barry had not the rage of being delicate, which some young ladies had, who made themselves odious, either by making objections, or taking cold upon all occasions. Miss Barry might see she kept her carriage open as long as possible every year; and the present day was positive summer, though almost the last day of October.

Alicia assured her Ladyship she was used to live in the open air at Castle Barry. Lady Donnington, having forgotten that Miss Barry, though used to free air, might not be used to the airy fashion of a lined cap, made no further enquiry into her habits or constitution, but entered at once into an amusing description of the amusements going on, and the people of fashion then resident at Brighton.

Amongst the most ridiculous portraits she drew, was that of the Polish lady, whose first assembly in London had been the subject of her animadversion during

Colonel Barry's visit to England in the spring. She talked of her hideous person and wardrobe of jewels; her idiot-like manner, and real maliciousness; her mean *ménage* and external magnificence: in short, Princess Azorinski, thus painted, certainly deserved the title her biographer gave her, of the Little Monster; and Alicia, who had begun with smiling at the motley picture, ended by shrinking from the society in which this hateful foreigner would be found.

So varied and so odd were Lady Donnington's descriptions of every body and every thing, that it was not in the nature of youth to be less than entertained at the moment; though after-reflection might suggest, that not one particle of interest in any thing good or great was manifested by the satirist. Under the influence of existing pleasure, Alicia's recent tears were forgotten, and her beautiful eyes shining out in their fullest lustre, when, returning from merely looking at the outside of Lady Donnington's house, the carriage whirled them down

the west cliff, already thronged with horsemen and promenaders.

Perhaps no out-of-door scene is so much like the interior of home-meetings as that we see at Brighton. There is much of the easy carelessness in the rencontres, recognitions, separations, and returns which we find going on in the crowded assemblies of London: the same audible arrangement of future plans; the same little clustered knots of persons solely occupied with one another. In winter this is eminently the case; for, by that season, every mere bird of passage is gone back to their business or their Christmas dinners, leaving the *trottoir* and the drive entirely to the members of the one great family of fashion.

The scene now presented by the cliff was really agreeable. The sun was shining with autumnal fervour in an unclouded sky over that wide expanse of sea which spreads almost level with the lower town of Brighton; and the sea itself was of glassy smoothness. The carriages passing on to longer drives were

open; and in them a variety of pretty faces, or seemingly pretty faces, indistinctly seen through the universally-worn veil, formed a moving picture of pleasing objects. Young men on horseback now and then rode round one of these attractive equipages, or, crossing to them from the foot-path, stood talking in at their side.

In this way Alicia caught glimpses of so many brilliant eyes coquettishly shown for a moment by the gathering back of the veils, and of so many coral lips smiling through those curtains, that, strange to say, she felt with pleasure her boasted face would fail to strike here as it had done in Waterford. Nay, she was so absorbed in pleased admiration of others, that she soon lost all thought of herself; therefore did not at first observe that female parties on the *trottoir*, and carriages in the drive, were rapidly deserted, whilst Lady Donnington's barouche was gathered round by pedestrians, and passed and repassed by horsemen.

She was quickly made to guess what all this meant. Although the young Fashionables, thus attracted, stretched over each other to shake hands with, and talk to Lady Donnington, their eyes fastened on, or continually glanced at the shrinking form of Alicia, just as their different degrees of selfishness admitted. Lady Donnington, enjoying the mischievous amusement of tormenting, went on uttering little jests about some ball they had all met at the night before, taking no notice of beseeching looks, or of the muttered reproaches from one or two, who kept saying, "How very barbarous, Lady Donnington!"

Horseman after horseman stopped, and swelled the troop round the carriage. None of them addressed Alicia, because none were presented to her; therefore she could not complain of being herself the cause of such a novel crowd: but conscious beauty, in spite of foregone impressions, assured her she was looked at admiringly; and the distress of such consciousness only kindled a richer va-

riety of tints on her averted cheeks and modest brow.

From her sprightly companion's dialogues with each new comer, she learnt, that when Lady Donnington returned from Brighton, she meant to surprise every body with something quite new, by way of entertainment: that she meant also to circumscribe her parties at Brighton to such a degree, that whoever hoped to be asked to them must be exceedingly pleasant and well behaved, or she would turn them over, without remorse, to "the Little Monster."

Every sworn follower of Lady Donnington, and many who had hitherto vacillated between the two houses, of course vehemently deprecated such a fate. At the moment in which this elegant clamour was at its height, Alicia's attention was attracted from it by three equestrians, who were walking their horses towards them, and talking as audibly and gaily as though riding in a private park.

One of this party was a young woman of childish make and size, though fur-

nished with a remarkable length of dark cloth skirt, floating out to her beautiful Arabian's feet. As she also wore a black veil depending from her riding-hat, nothing was discernible of her face except a set of very white teeth, which being rather large, took a broad light whenever she laughed, giving a most agreeable expression to her countenance.

"O those teeth!" exclaimed Lady Donnington, as the party were advancing; "so like the China keys of my great grandmother's old spinnet!—and that tiresome voice—so exactly a chime of bells!"

Alicia's ear, caught by that very voice, thought it made most cheerful music; and as the slow-pacing equestrians approached, the pretty childishness of broken English, coming with that music, made it doubly pleasing.

"Why for doos Lord Charl call my houze de merri Sherwood? Do say me, my Lord. Won't you open de mouze? How can you be so unpleasing dis only once!"

Such was the lady's address to one of the two gentlemen between whom she was riding, who was no longer able to answer: he seemed neither to hear nor understand; every sense locked up in one, that of looking.

Lady Donnington, either observing his fixed gaze, or her young friend's pleased notice of his companion, said, in an under tone, "Pray don't look at the Polish woman, Miss Barry." Alicia instantly drew back, and, by so doing, checked the advance of her new admirer, who was in the act of guiding his horse close to the barouche.

"Do tell my coachman to drive over you all, and get me home," said Lady Donnington, addressing one of her humble servants, yet managing to be heard much farther off. "If I hope to keep Miss Barry with me, I must not begin by tiring her to death."

The order, though not duly delivered, being heard by her Ladyship's coachman, was instantly obeyed. Equestrians and pedestrians were scattered on each side

of the rapidly-revolving wheels; even Princess Azorinski and her gallant escorts were driven to a side.

Lady Donnington laughed again and again, as the barouche whirled on, leaving glasses raised, hands kissed, and saunterers rendered stationary. She was in a state of secret exaltation. "Why for," she exclaimed, imitating the Polish princess, "does Lord Charl call my houze de merri Sherwoode! What affectation! Is it not much too sickening, Miss Barry, to see a thorough woman of the world, like Madame Azorinski, pretending to pass for a baby? saying things, just short of shocking sometimes, by way of being pretty and *naïve*? She knew perfectly well what Lord Charles meant; she only wanted to be flattered in the explanation."

"May I ask?" enquired Alicia: "I know of no merry Sherwood except Robin Hood's."

"Exactly the thing!" returned her Ladyship. "My outlaws are her band; no very flattering compliment, I should

think, after all. But her *Altesse* is so *entêté* with being told that the Hotel Azorinski is as pleasant as living under the greenwood bough with vagrants and robbers, that she is thankful for the very poorest creatures of any fashion that I cast off. It is very well understood that I will not patronise any body that goes to her."

Alicia's natural and direct enquiry of whether there were any thing objectionable in Madame Azorinski's conduct, forced Lady Donnington to imply such a doubt of her correctness, that her youthful companion pathetically lamented the discordance of a bad character with such an engaging countenance and tone of voice.

Lady Donnington besought her not to use such *excessive* phrases; desiring her to substitute *doubtful* for bad, when she spoke next on the subject; and not even then except amongst confidential friends. For as Madame Azorinski lived with her husband, and he showed no jealousy, and she *had* a society amongst persons of

rank and character, people were bound to *suppose* her spotless.

Without staying to construe the emphasis laid upon the word *suppose*, Alicia exclaimed, "Indeed, I think so!" The exclamation burst from her with genuine self-honouring trust in her own sex.

"You will find yourself excessively mistaken, then, I can tell you," replied Lady Donnington, with sarcastic coolness. "A husband is generally the very last person told of his wife's misconduct; and a house is sometimes made so pleasant, by a clever, artful woman, to the society she gets about her there, that many of the most respectable, even, don't like to break it up, by blowing upon her character. Monsieur le Prince fills up *his* day by giving treats and making treaties; while his little wife rides about with her favourite male friends, giving quadrilles and suppers, at which, for decency's sake, she contrives to have her old sposo present. However, she flirts so furiously there, first with one, and then with another, that her reputation is

not perfect. I am really sorry whenever I see a new man in her train:—that air *enjouée* is so treacherous!—I see it quite took you in, as she passed."

Lady Donnington, finding she spake with a bitterness of tone which betrayed her personal enmity to Princess Azorinski, changing her manner, abruptly asked Alicia if she did not know Lord St. Lawrence? Alicia said she recollected his having been brought to Castle Barry two months before, but had totally forgotten his person. Lady Donnington was silent, while one of Princess Azorinski's escorts, who had not long before ridden past the carriage, with a look at Miss Barry which challenged recollection, now repassed; and, receiving neither encouraging look, nor gracious bend, slowly rejoined his party.

Lady Donnington's repeated short bursts of laughter prevented her from saying who it was that had first galloped by, then leisurely walked his horse back. Alicia, therefore, saw only another well-looking man, in a blue coat, in addition

to others of the same description, who had, for the last half hour, been hovering about. Lady Donnington enlightened her.

"O! the delightful mortification of not being recollected! Lord St. Lawrence positively not recollected! I flattered myself you would not know him, because he was with my aversion: but it is sheer bad memory after all! How pleasant! Is it possible you did not think his Lordship handsome enough to remember? All the young ladies talk of him as an Apollo. At least, I suppose you remember that he is a *grand partie!*"

Alicia had too often heard that phrase from her mother to require an explanation of it now; she merely observed that she knew nothing of his Lordship.

"And all *I* know of him," resumed her Ladyship, "is, that he is getting violently into fashion, because he is so handsome, pleasant, rich, young, and his own master. I *would* not know him when he came last spring to take his seat in the House at his father's death; for he had

known that Polish woman somewhere abroad, and she caught him up the moment he landed; so my receiving him was out of the question. People tell me he is dying to get presented to me. You saw how he rode past my carriage!"

Alicia's face had not a shade of doubt, or of consciousness on it, while she said she had observed this.

"He will be in despair," continued Lady Donnington, "when he finds I am gone from Brighton for a month. See if I have not a dozen begging letters about him, after we get to Birkham, asking me to invite him to my *tableaux* on the first."

Knowing the literal meaning of the French word used by Lady Donnington, Alicia did not exactly understand what it could imply on this occasion; but as any thing relating to mere parties was at that moment indifferent to her, she let it pass unnoticed; asking, for the sake of something to say, "Whether Lord St. Lawrence was to be always excluded."

"I have not settled that point yet with myself," returned Lady Donnington

with affected negligence. "One is rather sorry for such a fine young man continuing the dupe of that horrid fright of a woman. However, if I do consent to make his acquaintance, I beg, Miss Barry, you will be properly grateful, as I assure you it will be principally upon your account."

This was said with an air of pleasantry, and a woman of the world would have answered its serious demand upon her acknowledgments by as adroit a mixture of jest and earnest. Alicia simply said, "that she had not the smallest wish of renewing her five minutes' acquaintance with Lord St. Lawrence, for she really thought that five minutes was the extent of her conversation with him at Castle Barry: therefore her forgetting him was quite natural.

Lady Donnington actually stared at her for a moment or two, dumb from astonishment; then in a tone of vexation exclaimed, not very civilly, "I abhor all trickery! If persons are not honest and upon honour with me, I have done with

them: pray don't affect such impossible ignorance, Miss Barry."

"Madam!—Lady Donnington!" ejaculated Alicia, turning pale, and in a tone that made these mere appellations sound like an enquiry into the meaning of the words honour and honesty. There was something in the fixture of her eyes which denoted that her nature had a spark of indignant feeling in it, which determined insult would not only rouse but blow into a flame. The woman of the world was struck.

"I must suppose, then, my dear Miss Barry," she resumed in a subdued voice, "that you really are as very artless as you appear; that you know nothing of fathers and mothers' natural wishes and expectations. I am to believe that you did not in the least understand I should be glad if you honoured my chaperoning by marrying well while staying with me. Now, although this is extremely provoking, I am determined to be very noble, very magnanimous, and when Lord St. Lawrence negotiates for the fiftieth time

to be asked to my parties, I will ask him."

Alicia's whole person became on the instant, as Lady Donnington's exclamation expressed, a perfect illumination, so vividly bright shone the blood through her transparent skin. She answered from the indignant impulse of the moment; and perhaps neither so wisely nor so temperately as it was possible to have done, even under the guidance of the very delicacy which prompted her unguarded expressions.

Disclaiming all thought of marriage until won from present attachment to her own beloved home by the most unequivocal preference, she declared that could she systematically contemplate so sacred a bond in any other way, she should despise herself. The marriage vow, she thought, did indeed bind a woman to fidelity; but she could not see what other respectable character it conferred upon one who went to it with no individuality of choice, except as the rank or riches of a proposed partner at-

tracted inclination. The mere speculation of marrying, admitted into a young woman's habitual thoughts, she could not but conceive, sullied the bloom of the heart to a revolting degree.

Alicia had been hurried into such extraordinary agitation, that tears started in her eyes, and she added, in a paroxysm of distress — "O pray allow me to go abroad with mamma, Lady Donnington! I am not fit for the world — I know I am not. I shall never be unmindful of your kind intention; but indeed, indeed, I had far better be suffered to go with my mother and sister."

Lady Donnington was not often moved to extreme anger; but at this moment of unexpected opposition and possible discomfiture, she was almost inclined to give the speaker a box on the ear: so childish, yet so provoking, did she consider her. Mastering the mood, however, (for her own idol self was at stake;—her fashion! her power!) and steadying her voice, which would otherwise have vibrated from vexation, she begged Miss Barry to

say, whether there was any real breach of decorum in the friends of a young lady wishing to give her the same opportunity of fixing her affections upon a man of character, rank, and fortune, as upon one without such qualifications? Was she a convert to the illiberal doctrine, that no man of good birth (high birth, if she pleased) was worthy a woman's heart?

Alicia stammered out a denial of such prejudice and folly.

"Then did she think that sterling good qualities and agreeable manners were the worse for being united with title and fortune?"

"Certainly not."

"Were two fates offered to her by some benevolent fairy, would she prefer the man whose income barely gave her a sufficiency, to one, with equal merit, whose station in the world and ample fortune enabled her to have all sorts of charity fancies (Lady Donnington, with a smile, professed to divine Alicia's particular foible); to do multitudes of kind things to friends and strangers, and to

gratify her parents' natural wish on the occasion?"

Alicia, with increased confusion, was again forced to answer as her questioner expected.

Lady Donnington paused an instant, then assuming one of her best-studied engaging faces, and with a voice so softened, that the tone was positively winning, added playfully, "Now don't beat me, Miss Barry, for putting a last question. Have you not already been made love to by some favourite admirer?"

Alicia steadily answered "never!" but she was colourless. "Well, then, my dear Miss Barry," exclaimed the victorious Lady Donnington, "what *is* the quarrel between us? and why are you to run away from me, to avoid the scores of admirers, whom you will have my free leave to dismiss, one after another, whenever they make the proposal? I am much mistaken, by the way, if Mrs. Barry would leave you so perfectly your own mistress. So far am I from desiring to have the slightest share in disposing of your pretty

hand, that I beg never to hear one of your love-stories: don't let me have any thing to do with accepting or refusing; refer all the men to your own family; only be upon honour with me, and don't use any men ill that you meet at my house."

Alicia's expressive look asked what Lady Donnington meant.

"I mean to say, don't thoughtlessly lead a man on, by encouragement, and then deliberately refuse him, or you will get *me* into a scrape. If you fairly promise this, I will as faithfully engage never to speak a word in favour of any man whatever, be he rich or poor, lord or commoner. You shall be free to like and dislike unquestioned; and I must be free to have whom I please at my parties: so if the whim takes me, after all, to invite Lord St. Lawrence to my *tableaux*, you must allow me for once to suppose that I may be good-naturedly taking a man out of one danger, without running him into another."

The significance of Lady Donnington's

countenance and tone were not to be mistaken; and, blushing anew with the humiliating idea of having been too quick in her apprehensions, Alicia stammered out some words of apology and concession.

Lady Donnington then appeared to understand that every thing between them was amicably settled; and, as they came in sight of the hotel, said gaily, "Well, now we understand each other: you are to be very good, and do whatever I bid you, by way of making yourself pleasant in society; and I am to be very good, and not say a syllable by way of recommendation of any of your swarm of admirers, that are to be. If you don't take a fancy to any of them, so much the better for me: I shall avoid all the fuss of a marriage, lawyers and the lover, papers and the papa."

Alicia could not oppose one valid objection to this seemingly fair proposal, nor refuse ratifying the amnesty offered by her opponent: she tried to smile, while acknowledging its graciousness;

but her heart was oppressed by a painful conviction, that from her mother indeed, as Lady Donnington had recently said, her scruples would have met with a different reception.

Yet she anticipated little gratification during her visit. Lady Donnington's ordinary manner was chilling to her; and the caressing tone that lady sometimes assumed never seemed to reach her heart. She felt afraid of what she was going to encounter; not because she believed the gay scenes of fashionable life would disgust her always; but from dreading that they might gradually become too fascinating, and obliterate tastes which were the dearer by association with the friends of her childhood.

Altogether, her heart was very heavy, and she listened in spiritless silence to her voluble companion's recapitulation of all that was to be ready with her own proper self on the next day, for the excursion to Berkshire.

While Alicia slowly entered the hotel, Lady Donnington drove off, felicitating

herself upon the success of her plan for utterly extinguishing the fashion of the hotel Azorinski.

The nature of Lady Donnington's present triumph, and future expectations, must now be explained. Princess Azorinski had not been in England two months when, by favour of her acknowledged ugliness, and unceasing good humour, she turned the tide of popularity at once from Lady Donnington. The women were thrown off their guard by her want of beauty, and the men were taken by her harmless spirits. This agreeable foreigner, living as easily in her own house as if it were an hotel, made it in very deed as easy to others. There was no trick in her frank surrender of all right over her guests; a trick which *tact* is so often called upon to find out, and covertly propitiate; and which many practise, who profess the gracious creed of "letting every body go their own way."

Always pleased, always pleasurable; suffering every one to come and go at

will: controlling no one — managing no one — exacting no sacrifices; her husband giving the best dinners, and she the gayest balls imaginable, — Princess Azorinski almost gained the affections of her society, because she never dreamt of meriting any thing at their hands: every thing she did was gratuitous and uncalculating.

This conduct, emanating from a disposition of such pure kindliness, as it aimed solely at the point of making others happy, only wanted enlightening, to take a far different direction; and to labour as strenuously to do good, as it now did to promote pleasure.

The same sacred light would have shown her, that the very pleasures she thus disinterestedly procured for, and shared with a crowd of various characters, were, from their frequency and zest, so many snares to them and to herself: she was, however, as yet too young, too unreflecting, and too ill-guarded by her husband, to see any danger under the flowers she was strewing over so many persons' paths as well as her own. The Prince enjoyed

seeing her admired, in spite of that comic mal-arrangement of small eyes and a wide mouth, which had struck even him, before her engaging hilarity won his heart: he was forty, she was three-and-twenty, when they came to England: three years of happy married life had assured him both of his wife's affection and honour; and, yielding to the vanity of seeing the woman who preferred him surrounded by much younger admirers, he was not sufficiently careful either of her reputation or of her safety.

Lady Donnington was not unmindful of this: she set herself upon the watch for some tangible misconduct in the Princess, from the moment in which the latter began to be talked of, as "that charming grown baby!" At the precise instant in which the town were divided between Donnington-House and the hotel Azorinski, when Lady Donnington was alternately railing at and ridiculing "the little monster," and when every one connected with either was either a partisan or an enemy; the young Earl of St. Lawrence

arrived in England from the Continent, to take his seat in the upper house. His arrival set the seal to Lady Donnington's hatred of the unthinking foreigner.

Although the new peer (for his father was recently dead) had spent above six years out of his own country, his reputation for elegance, taste, and accomplishments had been continually coming over from the Continent, with every returned traveller or diplomatist. Men of cultivated minds looked for brilliant coteries of an intellectual kind at his house; persons of mere taste for the highest luxuries in their line; the young of both sexes anticipated every sort of exquisite assembly; while provident parents speculated upon their daughters' chance of securing the earl, his fortune and his accomplishments to boot.

Every one waited, therefore, in breathless expectation for his casting vote, to decide between the rival houses.

The very first night of Lord St. Lawrence's arrival in London, he was seen in Madame Azorinski's box at the Opera;

after which, so far from seeking Lady Donnington's acquaintance, he had more than once been heard to wonder how she could have acquired her former popularity; as her dragooning system appeared to him the very reverse of what men, at least, permitted themselves to yield to.

This remark was sure to get round to Lady Donnington, inspiring her with the strongest aversion, not so much to the original speaker of it, as to the innocent person whose different manner she could not but suppose suggested the censure. From that moment her whole existence became a perpetual rack of schemes and disappointments. First, she tried to ridicule the Polish Princess, and jest that lady's admirers into being ashamed of their admiration; then to throw contempt upon the worshippers themselves; then to excite suspicion of her character amongst jealous or newly-married wives, mothers afraid of having their daughters put by in her company, and credulous young women eager for the love of the very man whose probable *liaison* with

another man's wife they were anxious to break.

This policy for some time retarded Princess Azorinski's ascent to the throne of entire dominion, throwing confusion amongst her subjects. Whilst many yet held aloof, suspending their decision, and unsworn to either, Lord St. Lawrence withdrew his weight in the scale for awhile, by going over to Ireland. Lady Donnington hoped that her enemy's spell was broken; but his Lordship returned, and soon afterwards was heard of at Prince Azorinski's villa near London. She went herself to Brighton: thither the hated foreigner followed; thither also came Lord St. Lawrence.

To Lady Donnington's hard-judging mind, it was now evident that Lord St. Lawrence was Madame Azorinski's lover, in the full sense of that term, as understood by English women, when applied to the favoured male friend of an unprincipled married coquette. She, therefore, hoped that such short-lived

power would soon terminate, and disgust, as usual, follow.

Nothing like this, however, happened. Lord St. Lawrence was as much with Prince and Princess Azorinski as formerly; nay, more than formerly. He was at all the Prince's dinners, and the Princess's parties; he spent whole evenings with them in private, and rode out with them, separately or together, generally every day. Lady Donnington had no resource but fervently wishing they might go off together, and so pull the edifice at once upon their own heads. A sudden ray broke in upon her three days before she penned the memorable epistle to Mrs. Barry: it came in the shape of a report from one of her secret-service people.

This genteel spy, or contractor for gossip, had been at a private view of some very fine pictures destined for sale; and, chancing to be near Lord St. Lawrence, when one by a Spanish painter was under review, described his Lordship's raptures at sight of it, by way of

covertly showing that such a vivid admirer of beauty could not be long the slave of Madame Azorinski. Struck by one name her informant uttered, Lady Donnington made him repeat his story, her own thoughts meanwhile rapidly sketching out a plan of operations in consequence. The substance of this information was, that while two friends, with Lord St. Lawrence, were exclaiming at the perfection of a single female figure meant for the shepherdess Marcella, in Cervantes's interesting tale of Christopher, the Earl himself, after eagerly exclaiming at its likeness to a lovely creature he had seen in Ireland, declared that even so, this exquisite combination of form and colouring was but like a copy of Titian's finest picture by an inferior artist, when compared with the breathing beauty and softer grace of Alicia Barry.

Lady Donnington was now mistress of a charm for Lord St. Lawrence, and, as she hoped, a stiletto for Princess Azorinski's power. The despised letter from

Mrs. Barry, which, when received, had been once glanced over, then laughed at, and finally forgotten in tempestuous passions of envy and hatred, was now recalled by a strenuous effort of memory. Then, thinking it better to insure gratitude for voluntary kindness, instead of humiliating herself by making false excuses, her Ladyship wrote to invite Miss Barry on a long visit to her, trusting for absolution of past rudeness to Mrs. Barry's ready supposition that her maternal epistle had miscarried.

The momentous invitation had gone—the invitation had been rapturously accepted — this lovelier Marcella was come — was seen — and Lord St. Lawrence had already left the side of Princess Azorinski, to ride twice past Lady Donnington's barouche.

To have Lord St. Lawrence's imagination set to work by this unexpected apparition, and to produce Alicia afterwards with brilliant effect; to enjoy the triumph of receiving incessant letters of petition on his account, Lady Donnington pur-

posed prolonging her stay at Birkham until within a day or two of the evening destined for opening her marine villa. By the time Lord St. Lawrence should have made application for a card for her *tableaux* through as many channels as were necessary to establish her power and insure her rival's fall, she knew it would be wise in her to relent, and not only admit the young Earl to her house, but to render it as enchanting as possible.

For this cause, she had condescended to reason with the little simpleton (lest open anger or contempt should rouse her to the resolution of actually accompanying her mother abroad), and had readily offered to take no part in promoting any man's suit for her favour. Thus gladly absolving herself from the implied engagement of taking an interest in the business of her happy settlement, and using the trust reposed in her by a credulous mother solely for her own selfish purpose.

Elated with present success, and the

prospect of future triumph, Lady Donnington may be left to drive back alone to her hired house.

Mrs. Barry, being under her maid's hands for a slight alteration in her dress, was not in her sitting-room when Alicia returned. The sisters met with more than their usual flow of affection. Poor Flora was not one of those passionate persons who lay claim to the merit of immediately *forgetting their own violence;* erecting upon such a monstrous claim a character for *goodness of heart.* She felt that the merit of such forgetfulness belongs solely to *the person who has suffered the outrage.* Therefore, with bitter tears and true contrition, she sat watching for her sister's return; and counting every moment until she might acknowledge her sense of faultiness by one silent long embrace. Well did she know the placable and tender bosom upon which she now threw herself, smothering a sob under the kiss of welcome.

Alicia's forgiveness was unfeigned,

and ever outran the penitence of the offender: it waited not for a single confession of self-blame. Always anxious to spare her sister's stiff-necked pride the humiliation of concession, she hastened to relate all she had seen during her drive through Brighton. Their mother's immediate entrance obliged her to recommence this detail.

Mrs. Barry was so wedded to her notion that the gay world only wanted to be known to become an object of passionate desire, and that consequently Alicia would soon be ready to pay any price for remaining in it, that, after getting over her panic at Alicia's first part in the dialogue between her and Lady Donnington, she guaranteed all which this new friend had promised on the score of her daughter's freedom of choice.

Something, however, was to be conceded by Alicia in return: and this was, the promise of making it her study to please Lady Donnington; never to hold back from any of her Ladyship's plans

of amusement, or to demur about doing what every body else did; not to make excuses for staying at home when Lady Donnington wanted her to go out; to conciliate all the persons Lady Donnington liked; and not to make acquaintance with any one she disliked: of course, to avoid Princess Azorinski.

Upon the subject of Lord St. Lawrence, Mrs. Barry constrained herself to a marvel: she was so convinced that he had ridden to and fro past Lady Donnington's barouche for the *beaux yeux* of her daughter, that it did indeed require very great exertions to suppress some outward show of her exultation. But Mrs. Barry was beginning to read the character of her now-important child; and, having the whole family interests at stake, was gifted with sufficient cunning to act adroitly when properly stimulated: she therefore affected just to recollect that he was *very gentlemanly*. The insinuations of the Mr. Donovans were forgotten, or only remembered to be disbelieved; so easy and accommodating

were Mrs. Barry's judgments upon every occasion in which persons of rank were implicated.

Grateful for her mother's apparent sanction of her own peculiar views with regard to marriage, Alicia promised obedience in all minor concerns; yet ventured, ere she plunged into a vortex of expense, to state the dread she had of it, as being criminally wasteful; instancing the fantastic extravagance proposed by Lady Donnington of a man servant for her alone.

Mrs. Barry paused a moment, then brightening up, said she was confident Lady Donnington would not propose any thing that was not right; that every body knew there were young ladies who frequently went visiting about, as little considered as regular companions or practised toad-eaters, simply because they were not rich enough to dress themselves or have a maid for themselves; and that most likely Lady Donnington was kindly determined to put it out of the power of the greatest ill-nature to represent Alicia

as any thing else than the daughter of a man of fortune, by thus bringing her out in the first style of elegance and propriety. Indeed, Mrs. Barry could never be sufficiently grateful to this charming friend, for so much consideration. Mrs. Barry added, that as, at the most, these new expenses would only be for a few months, — as she would merely have to pay the wages of a man and maid, and milliners, and mantua-makers' bills, — such could not ruin any body, nor displease any body; so Alicia might complacently leave it all to be settled between her father and her distinguished chaperon, after the former returned from Jamaica.

Alicia still pressed for some positive and moderate sum to be specified to Lady Donnington, as that within which Colonel and Mrs. Barry would like their daughter's expenses to be confined. She protested with a starting tear, that she would far rather have this squandered money sent to Marcus to purchase him on in the army, and so hasten his return, than laid out upon her flowers and gauzes.

Nay, she added, that, however large her dear father's income might be, she knew of so much more want and misery in their own country than she had ever been allowed the means of relieving, that to spend excessively upon herself, seemed to her an actual sin.

Flora, who had hitherto curbed her impatience to enter into this discussion, now vehemently seconded her sister's gentler persuasions; intermixing this with so many eager enquiries about the manner of Lord St. Lawrence, and so many artless reproaches to Alicia for having forgotten the features of one so very kind to *her*, that Mrs. Barry, half wearied out by importunity, half won by foreseeing Flora's influential interference for her destined son-in-law, at length agreed to write a polite note of farewell to Lady Donnington for Alicia to give in the morning, in which she would manage to name the sum limited. What that was, Mrs. Barry giddily and gaily refused to say; but she put a bank note into her daughter's hand for use upon momentary occa-

sions of amusement or charity, and got rid of the subject, by welcoming the different members of the family she was to go with to France, as they entered to dine together.

A well-covered table when surrounded by Irish people is almost always a joyous one. Sir Luke Ponsonby and his three daughters were thoroughly Irish, in spirits, good-humour, and good-heartedness. They were not yet sufficiently used to their lovely countrywoman's beauty to see it without clamorous admiration; and not even the presence of their servants could restrain the father's complimentary jests and the daughters' repeated prophecies during dinner. Before the evening ended, they had severally married their *dear girl* to every great name in the Red Book; which, happening to lie conveniently on a table, was perseveringly resorted to by the merry Baronet, purely for the sake of laughing at Alicia's blushes. While Flora was alternately showing herself vexed and pleased at this coarse tribute to the sister she idolized,

Mrs. Barry was perforce calculating the comparatively small sum left by her husband for division between her wants and those of their eldest daughter, and thinking whether it would not be advisable to accept an offer made to her in private by Sir Luke Ponsonby that day.

This was, to leave Flora at a French Protestant school in Normandy, and accept for herself all the accommodations of free travelling and free living at the hands of Sir Luke Ponsonby. She made herself sure that her pocket expenses, while flying about sight-seeing at Paris, with three prodigal persons like the Baronet and his two grown-up daughters, would be trifling, and that Flora, left at the same seminary with the youngest, would be quite as happy as with her. Mrs. Barry could make up her mind to sacrifice her respectability, but not her pleasures, to her children's advancement; so, conceiving that Alicia's sovereign chaperon would have no mercy upon the family purse, she determined to barter her independence for the next four or

five months; and under cover of "kindly joining the poor motherless Miss Ponsonbys," acquire a mean of visiting Paris free of cost.

Poor Flora little guessed the fate that awaited her: happily she did not; or the reluctance with which she said farewell to her sister on the morrow, when Lady Donnington's packed-up carriage, and packed-up self, stopped at the door, would have amounted to resistance.

Deceived by the idea that her dearly-loved Flora was first to go to Paris with her mother, and then to settle with her at Madame Maronville's, Alicia consoled herself for this separation, by supposing the lively interest her sister would take in all the memorable places of a capital haunted by the memory of great events as well as of fearful crimes: in each other's letters she thought they would still continue to feel and to think together; and she therefore smilingly desired Flora to write her long and frequent accounts of all she saw. She kissed the weeping

girl again and again, inwardly affected herself; yet solicitous to cheer Flora, and awaken her drooping spirits to pleasurable expectation. From her mother she did not part tearfully, because her mother jested at her two silly children, as she called them, for crying at what would make other girls wild with joy, and was in a hurry to get her away. Mrs. Barry indeed wished her daughter gone, because, like many other weak yet obstinate persons, she did not choose to have her new plan questioned, and was every moment afraid that something might slip from her unawares which would show her old plans were changed.

After another hasty clasp of Flora, Alicia went down stairs and got into Lady Donnington's carriage, with a thanking bend of the head to her mother's old servant, who stood sorrowfully bowing at not having been thought good enough to be left with his young lady. One short catch of the breath, as the equipage drove off, contained Alicia's latest farewell to those she left behind; and a hasty bow

from her companion answered Mrs. Barry's kissing of hands at the hotel window.

After a few words of salutation, Alicia gave her mother's note to Lady Donnington, who read it somewhat cursorily, muttered "O, very well!" and immediately entered into conversation upon the trivial concerns of their journey.

First, her Ladyship described her own house at Birkham; then the resources a romantic or reading young lady would find there; then spoke of the exquisite French maid she had actually stolen from a fine friend for her, and the steady man-servant they were to find by the time they returned to Brighton. After the mention of a French maid, French fashions were canvassed, and their greatest patronisers along with them. Both hats and manners came in for much of Lady Donnington's sarcastic pleasantry. During this discussion, Alicia, in spite of her better judgment, was amused by the mixed liveliness and bitterness of the anecdotes thus related. When the day was half over, the peeress, all at once, declared she

thought it a bright idea to go to sleep, and recommending Alicia to follow her example, literally either slept or dozed all the remainder of the way to her country house.

At Birkham, Alicia found extensive plantations to roam over; innumerable popular works to smile or weep at; a richly-furnished green-house to haunt, and make herself familiar with exotics unknown to her before; and a respectable housekeeper to consult when she wished to turn her many leisure hours to usefulness for the poor.

Thus employed, she scarcely missed companionship, although Lady Donnington did, as she had professed she would, devote her whole day to business.

Lady Donnington being, in addition to her other qualifications, a farmer of no mean ability, and ably uniting a passion for show with a talent for accumulation, lived in a riding-habit when at Birkham during certain seasons, from the hour of rising to that of dressing for dinner. At that meal she always ap-

peared in the most elegant home-costume; so that Alicia, habituated to the same regular change of apparel, and assisted by her French maid, quickly succeeded in fixing a style of dress for herself, quite satisfactory to Lady Donnington, and agreeable to her own taste.

Two or three country families had the honour of contributing their young ladies to the Birkham "petticoat party," whenever Lady Donnington chose to get up a quadrille, for the sake of rehearsing Miss Barry's excellence in the attractive art of dancing.

As Alicia understood that these quadrilles were given to break the monotony of Birkham for her sake; and as dancing was, indeed, her favourite exercise, she felt obliged to Lady Donnington, and thought the kind intention deserved at least to be met by a show of pleasure in its existence.

Lady Donnington was enchanted to find that even a mother's partiality had not exaggerated the grace and gaiety of Alicia's movements, nor the heightened

beauty of her face, when the bounding step and the all-awakened look were called forth by the joyous sound of music. She looked upon these with the earnest observation of a manager calculating his probable gains from a new actor's talents. Her house was falling off in attraction; its frequenters wanted some great star to bring them back: the lion of a night would not do; she must secure some permanent loadstone. In this young and lovely and accomplished creature she fancied she had found all she required; since the admiration her beauty inspired would be kept up by rivalry for her notice; and that, from her mixed unconsciousness and apprehensive delicacy, would be so long withheld from any man, that it would be long sought for. Lord St. Lawrence's worship of the new beauty would insure a crowd of worshippers. Lord St. Lawrence, and others like him, conquered from Princess Azorinski, was the whole aim of Lady Donnington's scheme: after that, Miss Barry might be left to "wither on the

virgin bough," in the bosom of her own family, or accept her only serious suitor when her visit and her high thoughts might be equally closing.

A woman of the world was too well informed to imagine the probability of a very splendid marriage for one wholly unconnected with any family of note; yet she foresaw that all the richest and noblest would be foremost in the train of Alicia's idolaters; and she had the hard-heartedness never to ask herself what wreck might therefore ensue to the poor young creature's peace.

As this unfeeling woman predicted, letters of petition were daily arriving from Brighton, describing Lord St. Lawrence's ardent desire of being presented to her on her return, and begging a card of invitation for him to her house-opening on the 1st of December.

These letters from different noble persons were regularly shown with affected indifference by Lady Donnington to her companion; and there being no allusion to the latter in any one of them (so well

did the peer and the peeress seem matched in the art of finesse), Alicia ceased to think of Lord St. Lawrence in any way connected with herself. This was exactly the point to which Lady Donnington wished her brought, lest rememembrance of their former discourse about him might conjure up some inconvenient scruples as to the very exhibition for which she destined her unsuspecting protegée.

Very soon after their arrival at Birkham, Lady Donnington had amused Alicia by explaining the nature of the entertainment with which she was going to delight "her *intimate friends*" (the assistants, her *intimate friends*,) on the first of the next month. This entertainment was to consist of a succession of *tableaux*, represented by living personages properly dressed and grouped, so as to form exact fac-similes of certain admired pictures, either historical or portraits. As the great charm of these representations consisted in the real likeness of each breathing figure to its ori-

ginal on the lifeless canvass, Lady Donnington had been at infinite pains to select her company of exhibitors, and to exercise them in the indispensable duties of duly arranging their draperies, and remaining fixed in one attitude.

Alicia's curiosity was roused, and her taste delighted, by the description of an amusement entirely novel to her, even in description, and dignified by its alliance with genius. She eagerly questioned Lady Donnington about its inventor, and those who were to exemplify it at her house; and was still more surprised and pleased, when told that every one of the young men and women who would thus embody the ideas of Raphael and Vandyke, were the most distinguished of all whom Lady Donnington had been speaking of to her through the last week, and were even now training *in secret* for the representation at her Brighton residence.

Lady Donnington confessed that she neither knew nor cared about the name of the inventor; she only knew that it was a favourite amusement at Vienna,

and that she was now going to bring it up in England. A list of the pictures to be imitated was then shown to Alicia, who, finding in it the names of two or three which she knew by engravings, and deeply felt the beauties of, became nearly as impatient as Lady Donnington herself for the night on which she was to see them.

Lady Donnington had already familiarised her with the names of all the lords and ladies who were to figure in her gallery of *tableaux*; and, having once excited a lively thirst for the exhibition, at once broke off a conversation one evening, by the fire-side, by exclaiming, "Don't fancy, Miss Barry, that I shall allow any human being to be idle on the first, who is at all worthy of being made useful. I mean to have you in a *tableaux*. I know a picture so exactly like you, that appear in a *tableaux* you must, and shall. Don't attempt to say no. Have I not a right to expect common complacency from you, in return for my excessive good-nature, in promising to make your

family my enemies for life (most likely), by never urging a certain subject?"

Alicia was dismayed, even to the utter incapacity of speaking. Lady Donnington assumed the fact of consent, and went on:—

"Victoire saw the picture before we left Brighton; she knows how to dress you. You will have nothing in the world to do but look pensive and pretty over a bier, as if you were going to a fancy-ball in the character. Indeed, you will only stand for ten minutes in your dress in the *tableaux*; and at the ball you must walk about and look silly the whole night."

Any thing like a regular exhibition of her person was so abhorrent to Alicia, that she would immediately and vehemently have refused to share in the present one, had she been able to find a fit way of doing it: but Lady Donnington had so artfully entrapped her into expressing hasty opinions, of which she saw all the fallacy when she must apply them to herself, that she knew not what to answer. How could she object, on the

score of womanly delicacy, when, in her eagerness for her own gratification, she had been so far from expressing distaste of the young ladies who were to compose the groups, that she had actually praised their good-nature? Alicia felt then how faithful had been the admonitions of Jocelyn Hastings, when he taught her to watch the subtle movements of selfishness within her own breast. She had just been ready to accept pleasure at the cost of other women's proper reserve, without even pausing to regret that they were thus forced out of it, or insensible to its respectability.

Though overcome by this thought, and by a recollection of her mother's command that she would comply with all Lady Donnington's wishes, she did articulate a few sentences of extreme repugnance; expressing, in addition, the consciousness of great awkwardness when nervously agitated; confessing total ignorance of such performances, and the conviction that she would never be able to preserve the same attitude for any time.

These objections Lady Donnington would neither admit nor attend to; but so determinately urged her right to judge best what her young friend could do well, or, at least, look well; and so successfully employed ridicule, to show her the vanity of fancying she would be so much more noticed than "the beauteous Lady Hyacinth Vavasour," that poor Alicia, what between vexation and submission, forgetting that beauty or ugliness made no difference in a question of maidenly delicacy, uttered the desired assent.

The French maid who had been hired for Miss Barry, because she would make all her dresses in the most perfect taste, and at half the expense of Madame ——, was hastily called in, to exhibit a pencil sketch of the picture in question, provided for the present moment. She not only undertook to make a correct copy of Marcella's picturesque habit, but to represent the corse of the unfortunate lover, by her own proper person, extended upon a bier, and covered to the chin by a pall. Victoire, from her dark

complexion and marked features, was well qualified to enact the part of a dead Spaniard: and as the artist had used the licence of supposing the attendant shepherds gone, and the fair shepherdess come to mourn afresh over the victim of her cruelty, no other personages were necessary for the groupe.

From this day Alicia was duly exercised under Lady Donnington's own eye, in the graceful attitude, the sweetly-sad expression of countenance, and the needful art of keeping quite still.

Lady Donnington was now in an ecstasy of triumphant expectation; and so pleased with her young companion, in consequence, that she absolutely undertook the trouble of inspecting the new wardrobe, which that able artist Victoire, aided by certain executed orders at Brighton, had created for Miss Barry's *début*.

Her Ladyship was pleased to approve every thing; and, having once pronounced her favourable sentence, graciously intimated to Alicia, that she should hence-

forth leave the business of her toilette entirely to herself and Victoire: since, with such a guide at her elbow, she never could wear any thing that was not *comme il faut*.

As November was closing, Lady Donnington took possession of her marine villa. Alicia returned to it in better spirits than when she left it: for she was getting accustomed to Lady Donnington's dictatorial manner, — becoming a little duped by her pretended kindness of intention; and she had heard twice from Flora.

This poor girl had been left, without warning, at a select seminary where the youngest Miss Ponsonby was sent for education. Though nearly heart-broken by disappointment, and by a keen sense of desertion, she had the resolution not to express her bitter feelings; but with a mixture of pride and affection natural to her imperfect character, expressed her belief, that, however disagreeable the change was at first, it would eventually be more for her benefit, to have her time

given to study than to amusement. She spoke with approbation of her new instructors; painted the luxuriant scenery round the old chateau, which Madame Maronville occupied; and, keeping all causes of discontent out of sight, fairly cheated her sister into believing her tolerably happy.

The morning after Lady Donnington's return, only two days before her *tableaux*, a grand rehearsal of the entertainment took place, which Alicia witnessed, being only wanted for one of the last pictures.

The pictures were so exactly represented; the persons chosen to embody them, either so picturesque or so handsome; the delusion, in short, so perfect, that she was in a perpetual thrill of enchantment.

None but actors in the scene were allowed to be present; yet even by this limited party the dazzling beauty of Lady Donnington's Irish friend excited the strongest sensation: she was stared at, enquired about, complimented, criticised; one half of the young ladies admired her

as genuinely, if not so rapturously, as the very few of the other sex who had a share in the rehearsal.

Only one looked sullen and kept aloof: something might be conceded, however, to the infirmity of constitutional vanity, and to the dangerous title of The Beauty, which its haughty possessor feared to lose.

Lady Hyacinth Vavasour was a pale, languid beauty, with dark hair, sleepy eyes, and features of faultless, moveless symmetry. She could not help feeling the kindling effect of Alicia Barry's varying countenance and complexion; and the lustre of that extraordinary hair, which one of the stricken youths (a boy from Eton), denominated the hair of a goddess: her own statue-like countenance darkened as she looked. Lady Hyacinth's part was to represent Fenelon's Calypso, surrounded by her nymphs. One of the group was a deserter from illness. Lady Donnington was secretly enchanted: she immediately besought Alicia to assume the character, and show-

ing her, in the copied sketch, the kneeling figure she was to represent, hurried her into the set. Lady Hyacinth Vavasour was drawing back, when a favourite friend whispered, "Miss Barry is only fit for shepherdesses and waiting maids!—Such a coarse colour!" Calypso's voluminous robe was again gathered up in due drapery.

Determining to open a complete battery of attractions, upon the senses, at least, of the devoted Lord St. Lawrence, Lady Donnington waited until the grouping and standing had been rehearsed several times, then gaily proposed that the nymphs surrounding the enchantress should surprise the beholders by dancing out of their frame, and going through a dance called the Grecian Quadrille, just brought from Greece by Colonel Chesterfield. Lady Donnington proposed this so carelessly and sportively, and it was so directly met by equally sportive compliance from the other young ladies, that Alicia had not the courage to offer an objection; though at the mere idea her

heart beat nearly out of her breast, words fluttered on her lips, but could not quit them; and her hand trembled distressingly, as it was taken by a sister of Lady Hyacinth's.

This young lady, as if to encourage her, (though after a momentary look of surprise) compared their present performance to the nervous situation of a person playing the game of magical music, or redeeming a forfeit, or telling a demanded story: a situation every person had often been in when young and social, therefore neither particular nor reprehensible. Alicia allowed herself to believe the comparison held good now, and with a thanking smile prepared to learn the dance.

The quadrille, being particularly simple in its figure, was quickly learned by Alicia; she first walked, and then danced it. At the beginning she was so confused by intimate companionship with so many high-born strangers, that her step was irresolute, and more than once, when dancing singly, she could not keep the time. Lady Donnington, however, saw,

that whenever her young friend was involved in the gay labyrinth of the others, her look animated, and her step became regular: she was therefore confident of her due effect, when distance from the spectators, and the excitement of lights, exquisite music, and her own awakened spirits had succeeded in banishing apprehension.

As soon as she saw that Miss Barry knew the figure perfectly, she broke up the rehearsal for that day.

The morning's private exhibition ended, Lady Donnington had the gratification of finding her table covered with cards, left by an unusual number of persons, who had of late wholly gone over to the enemy. Amongst these was the great stickler for Lord St. Lawrence, to whose entreaties she had finally yielded permission for him to bring his friend on the first, and present him to her.

With the natural sympathy of youth in what they presume innocently joyous, Alicia allowed herself to take an interest in Lady Donnington's frequent expres-

sions of pleasure at every thing having gone on so prosperously for her wish of procuring her friends an elegant amusement: trying, herself, to laugh away her fear of not being able to stand still when she ought to do so, or to move when she should be dancing.

Her cheerfulness was increased, when she found that she was not to make one of the company until her exhibition were over. Lady Donnington well knew that if such a face were once seen, nothing else would be looked at; therefore, with some difficulty, permitted Alicia to accept a proposal of Lady Lilias Vavasour's, which was, that they two should steal in, well wrapped up, when the exhibition-room was properly darkened, and so contemplate the first *tableaux*.

The anticipated evening came; ten o'clock came; and, as if in obedience to one impelling principle, scores of brilliantly-illuminated and coroneted carriages rolled onwards to the marine villa. Nothing was heard but a succession of loud knockings, and of louder announce-

ments. *Every body*, however, was not there, though every body had begged and entreated to be asked. Lady Donnington had the height of fashion to recover; and there is nothing like holding back, when we wish to urge others on. The novelty of the promised entertainment had done much; but the rumour of the beautiful new face had done more; and Lord St. Lawrence's long siege for an invitation had done more still.

Whatever was really the cause, all the *élite* of high life were either at Lady Donnington's, or had tried to be there, Prince and Princess Azorinski excepted. Lady Donnington's triumph was complete. Nothing could be more brilliant than the *coup-d'œil* of her one magnificent room, which had been formed out of two noble ones, originally divided by folding doors. The lower end, where the *tableaux* were to be exhibited, was entirely covered by a voluminous curtain of satin damask; and the length of the saloon shining with burnished gold, alabaster

and polished mirrors, was rendered dazzling by a lustre hanging in the centre.

This beautiful mass of glittering crystals and brilliantly-burning gas seemed pouring from the ceiling in a body of light, not unlike the matchless *jets-d'eau* of Versailles.

When her company had all arrived and looked round, and duly lounged about every novel article of Parisian furniture, arranged by British taste, Lady Donnington warned them to take their places; then gave the signal, and the whole body of light disappeared.

At this signal, Alicia with one or two others, wrapt up in their opera cloaks, stole upon a back seat, and quietly kept their stations there unseen and unsuspected, through great part of the exhibition.

The company were for a few moments in total darkness; during which, some laughing, and murmurs of a "a phantasmagoria!" were heard. At length the massy curtain was rapidly drawn aside, and ten pictures were successively dis-

played, represented within a superb frame, and lighted up, to give as accurate a copy of the light and shade of the originals, as of the figures imitated.

By this means skilfully accomplished, and from an admirably-calculated distance, the deception was so complete, that Alicia could with difficulty restrain bursts of admiration, as each new picture rose to sight with the repeated rising of the curtain. Flemish girls with guitars; Dominichino's Sibyl, and St. Cecilia; Guercino's St. Catharine, bending her fair neck to the stroke of her executioner, were severally represented by young ladies of sufficient prettiness, to become, when accurately dressed, almost fac-similes. Several celebrated portraits of Vandyke, Rembrandt, and Titian, were also admirably embodied by some of the finest young men, under Lady Donnington's orders. The effect thus produced was so transcendently beautiful, that even a great painter present was heard to exclaim, "Pictures indeed! — but what pictures! — from a divine pencil!" —

It was the observation of genius and enthusiasm; and Alicia, while she felt its truth, and gazed on these splendid wonders, knew not whether to think them real or visionary.

As the curtain successively closed over each magical representation, and the artificial lighting of each disappeared with it, a single alabaster lamp at that end of the saloon was instantaneously lighted, and a band of music, stationed in a gallery above, played pieces adapted to prepare the mind for the next subject.

Bursts of applause, and reiterated expressions of pleasure, had regularly followed the appearance and disappearance of these living pictures: every one who looked on them, except Lord St. Lawrence, was sincerely delighted; he, though otherwise pleased, being accustomed to see *tableaux* abroad, and impatient for one face alone, sat by the side of Lady Donnington, carefully endeavouring to hide under studied attentions his want of something more than he had yet enjoyed.

Meanwhile, Alicia was under the hands of Victoire, for her share in the performance; she and her companions had been summoned, while complete darkness hung over the audience-side of the saloon, and they had slipped away as easily as they entered. A few pastoral and plaintive strains played on the shepherd's pipe and flutes preluded the withdrawal of the curtain: such rustic music gave no warning of the angelic vision that burst upon the beholders.

In the simple habit of a mountain shepherdess, her veil half-lifted by one hand, this lovelier Marcella was seen bending forward, casting the chaplet of flowers just taken from her head upon the bier, where Victoire lay shrouded as the shepherd Christopher.

The scenic disposition of mountainous ground, necessary to a faithful imitation, concealed part of Alicia's figure; but even that circumstance heightened the graceful effect of her exquisitely slender shape, and the beautiful forms of her head and neck. Her radiant hair, mix-

ing with the transparent folds of her veil, shaded her head and shoulders; and the finely imitated moonlight cast upon her face, spread over it a silvery brightness which, though it effaced the roses of her cheek, gave a character of deeper interest to the expression of her downward eyes.

Even at that distance from the spectators, the crook against which she was leaning her fair face was seen to tremble in her grasp; nearly every one rose from their seats at the same moment. Happily, Alicia was too much agitated by excess of confusion to suppose that the general rising was for any other reason than to get a better view of the figure on the bier. Only Lord St. Lawrence remained seated; he was the most inwardly moved of the whole assembly: the curtain fell, and left him seated. Lady Donnington at first mistaking his immobility for affectation of indifference, then for a compliment to her, asked him "if he had ever happened to see the original painting of this *tableau*?" He replied in the affirm-

ative, adding something flattering about the agreement of his taste with that of her Ladyship's, in admiring the original picture.

"O but I insist upon your admiring my Marcella, too, as well as Mr. ———'s; unless your Lordship's admiration is all bespoken for Lady Hyacinth Vavasour."

Lord St. Lawrence, though one of the best-bred men existing, became all at once as awkward as acted coolness and purposed dissimulation can make a man.

"O, we must all admire Miss Barry," was his answer: "but I have seen her before: I thought then she had had more colour. I saw her in Ireland; I thought she lived there."

Lady Donnington's maliciousness was very near being too much for her policy: she might have parried this implied question; but affecting to be his dupe, she said carelessly, "She is only come to stay with me a short time, while her mother is in France." Then, after a longer pause, "I do hope you patronise Lady Hyacinth Vavasour's beauty:—she closes

my *tableaux*. I look upon her as my strong hold. My grand display is one of that divine Gerard's pictures."

The curtain divided as she spoke, to a strain of Weber's wizard music, and Lady Hyacinth was disclosed seated in the midst of a group of inferior attending beauties.

All but one, indeed, were so. Alicia, dressed as Eucharis, was at the feet of the enchantress fastening her sandal, for Calypso was attiring; and, though clothed sufficiently to satisfy ordinary delicacy, was yet so profuse in the display of uncovered shoulders, white arms, and a finely-moulded foot, that she presented a striking contrast to her kneeling nymph, whose lovelier form, shrinking under modest drapery, only shadowed itself out to the imagination by its grace. Lady Hyacinth Vavasour's person was upon that luxuriant scale, and of such perfect form, as we are familiar with in the fine statues of Greece; but colour and mutable expression were wanting to kindle her into something more than statue-like beauty.

Alicia, on the contrary, was all throbbing, speaking life: the light of youth and emotion illuminated now, her cheek as well as her eye; and the shade of modest consciousness being thrown over those beauties, were to them what a bright haze is to the enchanting prospects of sunny summer — a veil of greater glory. Lord St. Lawrence sat with suspended breath, as if afraid that at the slightest sound the beauteous spell would dissolve: one low murmur, however, rose, and ran through the rest of the assembly. Alicia heard it: to her ear it sounded like the shiver of the woods round Castle Barry, and at this voice of her home, came the recollection of Rose McManus. She felt conscious that were that discerning friend present, she would not approve this display before strangers: her heart began to beat with a sudden conviction of its weakness, in being persuaded to do what she thought a wrong thing, merely to deserve the temporary character of obliging. All her associates in this exhibition were intimate with the persons who sat

to see them; she alone was like an actress before the public.

This idea nearly overcame her, prompting her to start up from her position at Calypso's feet, and retire; but the injunctions of her mother, her own timid nature, and Lady Donnington's unmerciful character rendered her a coward: she remained where she had been fixed, unconscious that her very excess of shame and struggle, had conjured up fresh beauties of varying and exquisite colour in her cheeks. While the *tableau* continued immovable, Lord St. Lawrence had time to rally himself, and in an under voice to pay some forced compliments to the goddess-like contours of Lady Hyacinth Vavasour. He succeeded better in the few things he said by way of direct compliment to Lady Donnington herself; to whose taste and talent for grouping, lighting, and dressing the different pictures, he gallantly referred his greatest pleasure. Not even Lady Donnington, however, with all her treachery of badi-

nage and smiles, detached his eyes from the *tableau.*

Suddenly the band played the music of the Grecian Quadrille; Calypso and her nymphs danced out of their frame; some with half-finished garlands; others with flowing ribands or silken scarfs, held for the enchantress's toilette. At first advancing two by two in graceful measure; then interweaving themselves and their garlands; evolving, encircling, skimming singly out from the mazy circle with the gaiety and glitter of summer flies.

Calypso led this dance, but Eucharis alone was seen; though her part in it was of itself no greater than that of her companions. The exquisiteness of her beauty, its character of nymph-like lightness, and the airy bound even of her embarrassed step, made her the sole object of attention: she, meanwhile, believed herself lost in the throng of others.

For a few minutes, the bright bevy continued to flit and sparkle before the eyes of the gazers; then the music soft-

ened; their steps receded; fainter and fainter still came the mellow breathings of harp and horn; the frame again received its lovely inmates; while as imperceptibly as morning dawns, each figure retook its first station: the music ceased; and the *tableau* became as it had been, silent and beautifully still.

At this unexpected change, the whole room rang with acclamations. The conqueror in his car, the newly-elected emperor on his throne, were never conscious to a prouder sense of triumph than was Lady Donnington when she heard these plaudits, and glanced at Lord St. Lawrence: — it is sad to add, that never was triumph enjoyed with purer selfishness.

The peace, the honour, the whole future destiny of the innocent creature by whom it was achieved were disregarded:—that peace which might be destroyed, — that honour which might be tarnished, — that fate which might be sealed for eternal misery, by the awakened passions of Lord St. Lawrence.

In the pursuit of her own thirst for su-

premacy, and of revenge upon an unintentional rival, this heartless woman gave herself no time to ask, whether she were not sinning against ordinary principle, by thus risking the temporal welfare (for moral ruin she cared not) of an unexperienced girl confided to her by a silly mother,—yet still confided. She did not even lay the flattering unction to her soul, that she was daring danger for her *protegée*, in the wish of obtaining for her a splendid marriage; it was a matter of perfect indifference to her whether, after that one season, Miss Barry married Lord St. Lawrence, or any other lord or commoner, or never married at all. It would not be her business to enquire why she did or did not; nor to meddle with the inward state of the young lady's heart, when she should quit her roof.

In Lady Donnington's opinion, it was sufficient, that Miss Barry, being taken about by her, was given opportunities of establishing herself; if she neglected these, that must be considered her own affair; and if private gossip were true, and

Lord St. Lawrence an adept in abusing women's confidence, Miss Barry had only to look to her own conduct, like every other well-conducted young woman, surrounded by observant friends and relations:—Miss Barry, who had not a single friend or relation in England!

Lady Donnington forgot, that if Alicia did not marry, but left her with some impression made on her heart, she would go back to a comparatively-obscure mode of life, under the guidance of two vain, foolish parents, whose very eagerness for her advancement would, perhaps, render the way easy for the betrayer of her hopes to complete his criminal purpose. In truth, the woman who had never given a second thought to the hasty conclusion of the brother's life of pleasure, was not likely to care much more for the real welfare of the sister.

The termination of the *tableaux* exhibition, and the re-illumination of the centre lustre, were signals for general movement: other fine rooms were thrown open, where dancing, cards, flirting, convers-

ation, and music, were soon proceeding with peculiar spirit.

Most of the lady and gentlemen exhibitors retained their picturesque dresses while mingling with the rest of the company. Alicia, alone, hastened to change her dress of Eucharis for one less obtrusively graceful, before she mixed in the lively crowd. She was soon surrounded by persons of both sexes, desirous of being presented to her, or having her presented to them. Some did it from aimless curiosity, some from positive admiration, some from good-natured pleasure in another's powers of pleasing, others from a hope to find her foolish or disagreeable; a few with the haughty purpose of showing by their manner, that they considered one born out of *their set* as a merely patronised person, whom it was condescension to notice as society.

Alicia's modest yet graceful acceptance of every civility, and the sweet unsuspiciousness with which she moved away from those whose lofty looks she mistook for actual crossness, were greatly in fa-

vour of her future respect from the majority. Lady Donnington, out of regard for her own character, had already made it be understood that her young visitor's father had a large fortune in Ireland; but as she was obliged to own she was sister to Mr. Barry of the Guards, parents had some apprehension of danger to their sons in consequence; and the young men themselves, in the secret of Barry's sudden extinction, were not quite sure that serious love-making to a sister of his would be a good speculation.

Thus, although Alicia was gathered round and talked to, and watched by young and old, no heads of families evinced much desire of drawing her into their especial circle. Young men, who had either interested matches in prospect, or who were prosecuting schemes of which neglected wives were the object, gradually recovered from that bewilderment of every sense which had followed Alicia's appearance, returning to their corner *tête-à-tête* with more seductive shows of devotion.

Too many elegant idlers, however, remained persecuting Alicia with importunate attentions in the form of little temporary jests and allusions to persons and places of which their fair hearer was wholly ignorant. Amongst this party, strange to say, was not Lord St. Lawrence; because he had no mind to commit himself; because he felt more than ordinary admiration of the countenance which charmed him; and because he well knew that every female eye, at least, was upon the watch over his movements.

Lord St. Lawrence, though, alas! untaught in the best lore, was neither of libertine principles nor of libertine habits; yet had he gratified passion at the expense of conscience, and to the destruction of its idol. The very perfection of his taste for moral as much as for material beauty rendering admiration a snare to him, he had once before become enamoured of charming innocence, and suffered his heart to dote upon the contem-

plation of it until he ended by rending the very flower thus prized.

Years had passed since that time, and much of its agony and remorse was lulled to sleep; but his heart craved for something to make that sleep eternal. He fancied this opiate would be found in a new attachment of holier aim, though of a similar nature; and, determined to seek a wife, he was now open to every soft impression.

Good birth and education were, however, indispensables in his eyes: not positive nobility of birth, or excessive accomplishments, but such birth as gives a person a right to the rank of gentility; and such an education as teaches strict performance of moral duties. While seeking these, and resolved not to marry any woman in whom he did not find them united with the manner necessary to win his heart, he was well aware that he might engulf himself in a passion for the personal charms of the very woman whom, after close observation, he might disdain or fear to marry; and that such

a passion might again overwhelm his better principle.

Upon the present occasion, Lord St. Lawrence felt conscious of what he leniently called "his own infirmity;" and having received as strong an impression of Alicia's natural good tendency and bad bringing up as he had done of her outward loveliness, he paused ere he would lay the reins on the neck of inclination, and follow whither that led, to honour or dishonour.

This redeeming consciousness of inward evil had mastered his first purpose of returning to Ireland for the autumn, after having seen Alicia there during summer: but at sight of her again in Lady Donnington's carriage, when fearing he was growing into a dangerous habit of enjoying familiar companionship with Princess Azorinski, he quickly found a plausible argument for rather seeking the single than the married woman; and thus fell at once into Lady Donnington's snare.

This evening's studied display of the

fair stranger's person and bewitching accomplishments at first emboldened his passionate admiration, and revived thoughts unworthy of an honourable man; but these were not long of chastening. The striking and evidently-habitual modesty of her dress and eyes, seen in contrast with those of Lady Hyacinth Vavasour, who had obviously put forth her whole artillery of charms —the pure and privacy-loving tastes which Alicia's manner at Castle Barry indicated, appealed so resistlessly to Lord St. Lawrence's high-toned ideas of honour towards women, that, with some indistinct notion of her possibly being all he sought, he kept aloof to observe and to study her.

He was, however, presented to her afresh by Lady Donnington, at his own request; but it seemed merely to go through the civility of acknowledging his first introduction; to enquire after Colonel and Mrs. Barry and her animated little sister; and to repeat some comic national trait of an old lodge-keeper,

whose silver hairs and humorous freedom had amused him when riding through the gates of Castle Barry.

After thus striking the chord of home in Alicia's heart, and so leaving there a kindly feeling towards himself, Lord St. Lawrence made no effort to detain her from other society: he was contented with the subtle intoxication of observing her from a distance; and she, unconscious of his guarded *espionage*, refusing repeated solicitations to join the quadrille dancers, traversed the different rooms appropriated to different modes of amusing, with an awakened interest in them all.

A sister of Lady Hyacinth Vavasour's, who had been amongst the nymphs, kindly attached herself to the young *débutante;* and leaning upon her arm, Alicia felt the real support of good-humoured experience. Lady Lilias was in fact an amiable, agreeable girl, neither very handsome nor so decidedly without pretensions as to discard solicitude about her appearance. To most people she was just "nice-looking;" to a few, positively

and eminently pretty: it was the more amiable in her, therefore, to remain in such eclipse by the side of a stranger, merely because she was a stranger, and evidently embarrassed by the effect of her own attractions.

This young lady's frank, equalizing manner, and good-natured style of conversation, at once took from Alicia that feeling of being in an unknown land which is so embarrassing to youth when placed amongst strangers. In free companionship with another human being, she could now look delightedly round on the brilliant spectacle presented by the fine rooms and the groupings of the various sets into which the select company were broken. She was greatly amused by the fragments of lively chat which caught her ear in passing; she was captivated by the exquisite music in the remote music-room; nay, the mere ease of the whole assembly (by its union with perfect good breeding) prompted her to own that she had under-rated the fascinating power of such assemblies as the

present, when only hearing of them by the fireside at Castle Barry.

"Yet, for all this," she added, with a relapse into tenderness of thought, "Home, sweet, sweet home! as we have just heard with such heart-touchingness!"

"Oh, so we shall all cry out directly after hearing Miss Stephens," returned Lady Lilias archly. "I frequently hear papa say, that a great orator can persuade men to act against their principles very often: why may not a bewitching singer incline?"

"Lady Lilias! Lady Lilias!" interrupted Lord St. Lawrence, "how incautiously wise that is!" His smile had so much more approbation in it than his words, that Lady Lilias laughed fearlessly. "I know I am terribly given to talk out of place," was her good-natured reply, as she piloted Alicia and herself past his Lordship and her sister.

Lady Hyacinth languidly observed, that "Lilias went a great deal too much amongst blue people!" And perhaps, from the sheer nonsense which Lord St.

Lawrence immediately addressed to herself, became convinced that she had guessed right, when she concluded him devoted only to prettiness in women. Not being capable of self-martyrdom for any length of time, without some great object in view, his Lordship fell off from Lady Hyacinth; leaving her doubtful whether he did not do it solely from the fear of committing himself too far at once, or out of mere civility to Lady Donnington; since to Lady Donnington he now attached himself unalienably.

At supper Lord St. Lawrence sat next the lady of the revels: the latter was in her most agreeable mood. Even her forced comparisons and strange epithets were often entertaining; and Lord St. Lawrence being in the humour to be pleased, looked as if he thought her charming. He seconded her *bizarre* sallies; made various propositions to her for riding and walking; and gladly consented to join his name with hers for some subscription concerts.

Lady Donnington felt, and every body

saw, that from this evening Lord St. Lawrence was no longer the property of Princess Azorinski: body and soul he was now evidently the votary of fashion and Lady Donnington. So well did he guard his true object of interest, that her Ladyship obtained the full credit of his capture; and though her own keen eye continually detected the glancing direction of his towards another, she was so entirely propitiated by the care with which he masked his real feelings, that she was quite ready to leave them their full play. His Lordship, indeed, had no mind to lose the present golden moments for observation of Alicia's manner in its first freshness; and having practised ears and eyes, he contrived to give flattering attention to Lady Donnington's *bons-mots*, while listening to every word and watching every look of Alicia's.

Alicia's sweetly-youthful voice was not, however, very often heard, nor her eyebeam met in a single glance from her own immediate quarter of the supper table. It was her cheek that spoke; her

varying smile; her now lifted and now dropping eye; the eager inclination of her fair throat; or its quick and animated receding beyond the reach of mirth-provoking whispers.

Lord St. Lawrence detected no sidelong glance of incipient coquetry, nor caught a single remark which could belie the intelligent simplicity of her looks: he saw so many admiring faces thronged about and behind her chair, that he felt a pang of apprehension, lest so much loveliness of countenance and heart should be withered eventually by this ardour of admiration. No admiration, he was well aware, could be more intense than his own; and none perhaps might prove so injurious to its object: yet was he, of all men, the most convinced, that with the bloom of innocence, or the consciousness of virtue, much of positive beauty disappears from the human face.

There is a light in unstained purity and affections striving after higher objects, which no fire of passion can equal; but which petty vanities too often cloud,

and cloud over, until they wholly extinguish it.

From such "darkness visible" Alicia Barry's exquisite countenance was perfectly free; and to this absence of what may be called the sign of the world she owed her greatest charm in the eyes of Lord St. Lawrence. Every thing being new to her, nothing wearied: all the amusements of the evening had been admirably imagined and as well executed: the pursuit of particular objects in the men, and the anxiety for notice on the side of the young ladies, were so skilfully concealed by their mutual performance of thorough enjoyment or of cheerful indifference, that a novice like Alicia saw nothing else under such seeming. The monstrous phantom of display which she had conjured up for her own especial part was vanished also: she felt herself only one in a crowd; not a puppet on a stage, as her mother had incautiously suffered her to apprehend she would be; and the pulleys and wires being now ably hidden, she was in a fair way of letting herself be

continually played off, without suspecting degradation.

She had already been exhibited in a *tableaux* and a fancy dance; but having done it in concert with several young women of rank and character, though at first most reluctantly, was reconciled to the act as a complacency of common occurrence in the society to which Lady Donnington introduced her; believing the partial representations of the very vain or over-obliging performers.

Still, however, no throb of gratified vanity had yet quickened her heart's pulsation: she enjoyed the gay and glittering scene before her with a pure perception of the pleasure, unmixed with any triumphant thought of self. The only wish of which she was sensible about it was, that Flora were with her to share this exhilaration of an hour. To continue living in such scenes was a desire as foreign to her mind as that of wasting the whole of life at the exhibitions of a theatre.

There were deep and dear remem-

brances in this young heart which were destined long to keep the world from descending into it: — memories of home, or rather of Mount Pleasant, which she bore about her every where, as the Roman youth did the images of their household gods, sometimes to weep over, sometimes to cheer the over-tasked spirit.

Alicia had never been conscious how entirely she thought of that humble house whenever she spoke to herself of happiness and home. The mistake was natural, since both cherished roofs were canopied almost by the same trees. It was under that of Mr. McManus that she had learned all that was valuable to her; it was in his wild walks that she had enjoyed the sweetest effusions of girlish affection with Rose McManus; it was by his fire-side she had listened to Jocelyn Hastings.

Of Jocelyn Hastings Alicia still thought by a sort of stealth. She was half-ashamed of remembering him with so much interest and regret, when he appeared to have so wholly forgotten her. Yet as he was

valued in proportion to his intrinsic worth, not by the degree of regard he manifested towards herself, she believed it no diminution of maidenly dignity to recall sometimes the happy years of their childhood together.

Often in her solitary moments had his character, as contrasted with those of the prosperous now surrounding her, — his deep expressiveness of eye and voice, risen to recollection, with a tenderness and force to which she could not refuse many a silent tear: that eye which had ever looked upon her with gentlest kindness; — that voice, which had never spoken but to leave traces on the heart of goodness and sensibility; — that character, which had proved its fitness for the high destination to which it was devoted, by serene acquiescence in the most striking reverse of fortune!

How frequently had she wished that Jocelyn Hastings had been born her brother, or that Marcus had resembled him! She felt a yearning for such a one to lean upon now for light and guidance;

to tell her where she ought to confide, where doubt;—what compliances were amiable and allowable, what forbidden by other laws than those of the world. But Hastings was gone, as Rose McManus was;—nay, more entirely gone than she, for that inalienable friend kept up a regular, though necessarily unfrequent, correspondence with those who loved her at Castle Barry, and he wrote not to any one there.

Alicia had always to make an effort ere she could dismiss the recollection of Jocelyn Hastings; and, during the first part of this night's gay novelties, it had not come so fixedly before her as towards its close, when her animal spirits began to flag, and her body to weary. No longer excited by the presence of Lady Lilias Vavasour who was gone home, and disinclined to dancing, when that was resumed after supper, she drew to the side of Lady Donnington, and petitioned for leave to steal away to her room:—the leave was granted, and the next moment Alicia disappeared.

As she glided away, the former said carelessly to Lord St. Lawrence, "Did you ever see a field-flower keep ten minutes alive in a room? We garden-plants stand it much better."

"Your wild rose, however, has not quite lost its blush," observed his Lordship, copying the light tone.

"O how very merciless of you, my Lord, to *see* that unhappy trick of the poor girl's!" exclaimed her Ladyship, with playful reproof: then more seriously, — "Since these good Irish people have left their pretty daughter in my hand for the next three or four months, I throw myself upon your charity, Lord St. Lawrence, to help me in keeping Miss Barry from being run down by one or two sets that are dreadfully ready to find fault with every new face. I do own she is bashful and odd for a young lady well brought up; — but what's to be done? — her dancing shows how much may be made of her after a while. Pray do say a kind word about her dancing in society; — it will be so good of you! If

the poor girl don't take, or, at least, fancy she does, I foresee she will fall into the same dreadful nervous way Miss Radnor got into, when she was annoyed by those ill-natured Lady——"

Here the fair orator prudently stopped, leaving Lord St. Lawrence to smile and whisper the names of certain young ladies, whose mother was, next to Princess Azorinski, the person most dreaded and detested by Lady Donnington. Her Ladyship smiled too, assured that from this evening Lord St. Lawrence would no longer carry the weight of his support to that house.

He was indeed better pleased with Lady Donnington than he had expected to be; beginning to doubt her being actuated by the insatiate desire of depopulating every fashionable room but her own. Lord St. Lawrence was not the first person who has suffered his original impression of a character to be effaced by flatteries on a second interview, or by willing obedience to some passion of his own. Whatever caused his com-

placent feelings, complacent they were; and, although Alicia returned no more, to gild pleasures hackneyed to him, he remained amongst the latest of the party, quitting the marine villa only as day dawned.

From this night Lady Donnington's throne was resumed. Princess Azorinski, with all her witchery, ceased to draw "crowded" houses, as one of her seceders ungratefully termed her pleasant assemblies. Yet the cheerful foreigner's accessibility and good humour abated not; she received such of her early adherents as maintained their fidelity with the same frank hilarity as formerly, seeking no expedients for retaining them, nor talking of her truant acquaintance, but as subjects of harmless pleasantry. She made no hesitation in saying she thought nothing so natural as for every body to pour into Lady Donnington's, where there were so many agreeable things constantly going forward, and such a beautiful face to look at as Miss Barry's. But her husband felt and acted differently.

Prince Azorinski was, in fact, a high-spirited noble, who, knowing his own dignity and his wife's merits, suffered no affront on either to pass without marked notice. After Lord St. Lawrence became so decided a friend of Lady Donnington's, therefore suddenly discontinued his constant daily visits at the Hotel Azorinski, the prince, offended at such apparent levity, soon gave orders to be denied to his Lordship whenever he might call; and Lord St. Lawrence, once or twice sent away, was in no hurry to repeat an enquiry at his door.

Princess Azorinski, however, retained her kind feelings towards the truant, and while pleading for others, whose names her husband threatened to have scratched out of her visiting-book, managed to suggest an apology for their former favourite.

Boldly maintaining that Miss Barry's beauty first attracted each individual till a crowd was *organized*, and that crowd made Lady Donnington's parties so much more desired than those of other ladies, she playfully and allowably amused both

herself and her husband, by imagining the different objects, which, carrying the same persons with precisely the same views from her house to Lady Donnington's, would re-convey them back, should the tide of fashion reflow in that direction.

"Lovers dat do vant to follow der loves; husbands dat desire to spy der wifes; parens who do vant grandes parties for der childs; de folly pepe who go only to be amuse; all dese must go to my Ladi Donnington, or not fin' vat de seek; my Lor' St. Lawrence too, if he be fall in love wid Miss Barry."

Such was the considerate cheerfulness with which Madame Azorinski discussed the subject of her deserted *salons*, reviving her husband's good humour, by talking bad English instead of good French, because it made him laugh, and so gave a zest to that domestic meal, breakfast; the only meal which men of business, in any rank, can be said thoroughly to enjoy with their family.

Princess Azorinski was too frank and inconsiderate about common forms to refrain

from plainly telling Lord St. Lawrence, the first time they met at a third person's house, of her Prince's quarrel with him, and her defence. The unaffected good-nature with which she said it, and the simplicity of confidence which such a proceeding displayed, convinced Lord St. Lawrence that her *naïveté* was neither affected nor artful; that she had really cared for him and others, merely as agreeable friends, and that so far from being piqued by finding him attracted from her social parties by youth and beauty, she was rather anxious to hear it was so, that she might restore him to her husband's favour.

He said enough, therefore, to justify her in saying more to the Prince; and having satisfied him sufficiently for Lord St. Lawrence to regain his old footing whenever he chose, she contentedly suffered all the outward world to attribute her desertion to Lady Donnington's own individual influence. His Lordship, however, could not incur the risk of being shut out from the marine villa, ere he

should have studied the fair creature there with decisive scrutiny. He was already giddy with the passion inspired by her beauty; and, wishing to find her all that his moral taste required, yet in some degree afraid she would not prove so, watched her in public and private, at the expence of many a deserted duty.

Though not seven-and-twenty, Lord St. Lawrence had early learned to doubt and to dread when his passions were concerned; there was so much of the suspicious about Miss Barry's family history, so much in Lady Donnington's mode of bringing her forward, partly as an actress, partly as one whose pretensions justified the most fantastic expenses, that his delicacy took alarm, and losing sight of the possible consequences to her peace, he persisted in a system of conduct, calculated to excite expectation, if not to justify accusation.

Lady Donnington, however, was an able coadjutor, though not precisely from intention: she took no pains to open the eyes of her young *protegée*, when she

saw her blind to her power, but went on careering in her own car of triumph. Meanwhile, Alicia had her wide throne, as well as Lady Donnington. The newspapers were already full of the beautiful Miss Barry; the shops were full of silks and ribands of the colour she wore in the *tableau* of Marcella; the Steyne was full of gazers when she was expected to walk there; the East Cliff was full of carriages and equestrians when she was expected to drive there; the very church she attended was thronged by those who never entered there for the *true worship!* Parties were made for her, caresses lavished upon her, by the very persons who were the most envious of her attractions. So necessary was it for all to feel or to affect an interest in Miss Barry.

Her own beauty made Alicia *a sight;* Lady Donnington had made her *the fashion;* and some of the peerage seemed well inclined to raise her to high rank; but the natural humility of her character preserved her from becoming insolent; its artlessness and sweetness rendered her interest-

ing. Thus, not even envy could hate any thing in her except her loveliness; yet envy was active, and many an invidious remark, following up a purposed mis-statement, was successfully employed to excite distrust, or to throw an appearance of the ridiculous over her engaging diffidence.

After the exhibition of Lady Donnington's *tableaux*, the Grecian Quadrille had gone by the name of the Dance of Eucharis. Alicia, unconscious of this gallant alteration (its new appellation being then only whispered round), one evening prepared to share in it, as she would have done in any other common quadrille. Lady Hyacinth Vavasour, who had hitherto always taken the principal part in this pretty dance, sullenly refused to lead the gay band. Her manner was so ungracious, and the disappointment of her party so evident, that Alicia had not the heart to resist their entreaties, when they besought her to take the discarded situation, and leave the less difficult one to a noviciate.

In pure kindliness she consented; and long will that light and lovely figure, advancing with lifted head and graceful step, be remembered; alternately flying or floating away, as if on waves of air. So great was the sensation this dance excited, that Alicia's quick sense of delicacy was restored by the audible raptures of the lookers on; and, turning deadly pale, she said, in great disorder, to Lady Lilias Vavasour, by her side, "My dancing must have something wrong in it, or why is my name the only one ——" Lady Lilias interrupted —— "Just because you dance better than any creature on earth." "Either way, I never will dance this quadrille again," was Alicia's answer. The good-humoured Lady Lilias endeavoured to laugh her out of this resolution; but Alicia gave her such sound reasons against exposing herself to ridicule, or incurring the danger of becoming fond of admiration, that Lady Lilias, partly amused by the simplicity of her frankness, partly excited by her high-toned principle, let her go; and directly afterwards, being joined by Lord

St. Lawrence, poured forth upon him at once her admiration and its cause.

It may he imagined that he listened with dissembled pleasure to an anecdote which bore exactly the testimony he wished given to the delicacy of the woman he was studying so anxiously. It enraptured him at the moment, and, at the same time, showed him where he might, by good management, obtain much valuable information on the subject next his heart, without being suspected. Lady Lilias Vavasour then became his great friend; that is, he spoke so much more to her than to any other person, that it allowed people, who were determined not to see the frequent direction of his eyes, to speak of her as the object of his serious pursuit. Lady Lilias, taking the evidence of her own senses, was quite sure she was not, though she did not for some time discover that he contrived to get out of her every thing she could tell about Alicia Barry, and that by such means Lord St. Lawrence was acquainted with all the contradictory feelings of that artless girl;

her faults and excellencies, her resolutions and regrets.

Had Alicia, indeed, studied how to fix the wavering purpose of the young peer, she could not have hit upon one more interestingly effectual than that of confessing herself to this faithless yet kind confessor. She had, in truth, much to tell Lady Lilias of inward changes; and Lady Lilias was so unguarded, and so playfully cheated into indiscreet communication by Lord St. Lawrence, that she rarely left a single uncommon expression of her Irish friend's unrelated.

Against every one of her first expectations, Alicia found herself delighted by numberless objects of taste and beauty, by the grace and piquancy of conversation amongst persons by whom agreeable conversation is studied as a science, and by the friendly air which a smaller scale of parties gives to selected society. Manner, too, exercised its sorcery over her discernment, making her feel obliged when, in reality, some notable act of perfidy was perpetrating against her; causing

her to believe persons good or refined, who were, in fact, low-minded; and alluring her into fancying many things right which she had once thought must be wrong, by whomsoever practised.

Had the change stopped here, Alicia might not have paused to consider it attentively: but this supposed increase of liberality had its usual consequence; it began to sap certain good habits in herself. She found that she was now easily induced to give up whole days and weeks to a succession of high-flavoured amusements; to waste hours by different fractions through each day in talking of her dress and changing her dress; to let day after day pass without reading, working, writing to, scarcely thinking of, her far-distant family and friends; to pass nearly the whole of every night in a circle of thoughtless people, buzzed round by admirers; listening to every gossip sportively retailed, or to sentiments which, if not adroitly uttered as if in jest, must have called for a protest against their falsity; then to return home so wearied

as to drop to sleep with the hurried or languid prayer still on her lip; without having opened that treasured volume which she well knew contained the only armour capable of resisting the weapons of the world.

Jocelyn Hastings had often told her this, and his life bore witness to its truth: how, then, would he condemn her now, were he made acquainted with her present mode of living! Alicia knew that Jocelyn Hastings would not have interdicted a single harmless recreation temperately partaken of after the business of the day was done, and innocently used; that he would not have taught her to look with scowling suspicion upon the whole body of the society she was living in; on the contrary, that he was a teacher of that "charity which thinketh no evil;" but she was aware that he would have condemned her for suffering her entire time to be engulfed by unprofitable, culpable self-pleasing; nay more, for her timid acquiescence with a habit of Lady Donnington's, to which she felt a just re-

pugnance, but which custom amongst the higher orders dares to stamp with the name of unavoidable, — the habit of deliberate sabbath-breaking.

It was Lady Donnington's custom to drive or walk to some public promenade invariably after church, whether she attended it or not: Alicia having at first resisted, and then been alternately ridiculed and scolded into compliance, was at last weak enough to pass from prayers to the magic-lantern scene of the marine parade, losing in a giddy round of compliments, gossip, and remarks upon dresses and equipages, all impression of the sacred services from which she was thus forcibly torn away. Conscience, however, could not be stilled by all the bosom-sophistry which a timid nature employed to justify its own cowardice to itself; and she could not help imparting her trouble of mind on the subject to Lady Lilias Vavasour; in hopes her arguments would either sanction her in believing strictness a duty, or entirely satisfy her as to the innocence of compliance.

Lady Lilias was taught to respect the sabbath; to make it a day of rest for servants and horses; to abstain from amusements, and attend church; but she was not further informed; she did not yet comprehend its higher character of willing and joyful surrender of the whole soul to the Divine Institutor of that sabbath. She was therefore ready enough to give her friend absolution for the venial offence, though not so insincere as to say she believed it none; and in one of her *têtes-à-tête* during a ride with Lord St. Lawrence and others, laughingly repeated to him their mutual dilemma.

Lord St. Lawrence was careful to gather all that had been said between the two friends; and, separating Alicia's share in the discourse from that of Lady Lilias, was obliged to perceive that her heart was strongly agitated by the fear of violating a sacred duty. It is difficult to say whether this discovery gave his Lordship more pain or pleasure. In common with all men (whatever be their own speculations on the *one great question*),

he desired to have his wife deeply impressed by the only principle which gives stability to virtuous habits and affections; yet conscious that hitherto he had himself rather considered the subject of religion as unimportant to persons of established intellect, and inconvenient for men in the world, it was somewhat startling to fancy himself united to a perpetual monitor, under the form of a gentle woman. For some days he pondered over the subject, and at length determined to see how Alicia looked in the act of prayer, and to extricate her by a piece of address from the necessity of dissipating every Sunday.

He effected this by watching for Lady Donnington's carriage, just at the time it might be supposed she was going to the afternoon service; and appearing to take it for granted she and Miss Barry were on their way thither, begged to be admitted into their party. Lady Donnington, perhaps for the first time in her life, was so thoroughly disconcerted by this extraordinary request, that she literally

had not presence of mind to say she was not going to church; nor yet to rally her powers of ridicule, and jest Lord St. Lawrence into silence, before he had further astonished her, and sent her intended railleries back from her lips. He seized the opportunity, and with much decision of tone inveighed against the practice of going through the seventh day like all the other six; plying his fashionable hearer with arguments suited to her aristocratic notions, in which the favourite phrase of *bad taste* perpetually recurred; and dropping a word now and then of more interesting, if not exactly of more serious, import for the consideration of the sincerely-earnest Alicia.

Although Lady Donnington was not in the secret of her young companion's confessions, she was acute enough to conjecture that so singular a proceeding as this of Lord St. Lawrence's must be the consequence of her direct or indirect influence, and she could have uttered a very biting sarcasm upon the occasion, but restraining herself from pure policy, coolly said she had not

quite made up her mind about going to church again, but certainly would now, desiring his Lordship to give the proper orders to her coachman.

As they drove to their chapel, Lord St. Lawrence did not quit the subject of Sunday drives and Sunday pleasure-parties, until he had completely established the fact of both being exceeding *bad taste*, and had playfully exacted a promise from Lady Donnington, that she would immediately put such practices out of fashion, by her decided opposition. It is true Lord St. Lawrence mingled his implied censure of the person he addressed with so many delicate flatteries, so much professed deference for her opinion and example, and such liberal offers of himself and his time through every other day of the week, that Alicia might have found some fault with the means he employed to reach a worthy object, had not her judgment been warped by sudden interest in his situation and character. He spoke of the carelessness acquired on the Continent by Protestant travellers in Ca-

tholic countries; of the salutary institutions of their own happy land; of his notion that it was every Englishman's duty to unlearn as fast as possible the habit of indifference about forms and creeds which he was sure to acquire when long resident in Italy or France; and of his own especial regret that he was as yet little better than a heathen, either in point of knowledge or practice, in the matter of our established religion.

Lord St. Lawrence was too accomplished in the science of society not to say all this almost with a tone of badinage; but he knew how to deepen the character of a lightly-spoken word by a momentary expression of eye directed to the silent Alicia; and her young heart readily admitted the belief that he meant even more than he said, to so worldly a person as Lady Donnington. For the first time since she had known him, she grieved that such amiable candour and right dispositions should be stifled till perhaps they were destroyed by inclinations of a different sort; and leaning

back in the carriage, she continued thinking upon the subject;—thinking whether she had not been deceived about Lord St. Lawrence's character.

She called to mind, that Lady Donnington, at the commencement of their acquaintance, had spoken of his *liaison* with Princess Azorinski as sufficiently obvious to make her avoid the Princess's society; but, professing to tolerate that in a single man which she reprobated in a married woman, had refused to see that the marriage bond upon either one of two parties, who concur in breaking it, is equally violated by both: thus Lady Donnington, deeming the criminality slight, might not have taken much pains to investigate the truth of the rumour; and Alicia, herself undoubting, and caring only to keep such a libertine at a distance, had never asked a question about Lord St. Lawrence. Longer experience of busy life had now taught her to hesitate ere she believed a tale to another's disadvantage. Since her stay with Lady Donnington, she had heard so many whispered

horrors of wives and mothers, married men and boys flattered into guiltiness,— and the actors in these tragi-comic dramas were sometimes so obviously good or seemingly innocent — the stories were recited with such excessive efforts at rendering them entertaining — that already she began to discredit them.

She could not believe that any habits of life could give such a false appetite for the ridiculous as to make it be eagerly sought for, and liberally bestowed upon events, which to the heart, even in its natural state, must ever cause grief or abhorrence. Hastening, therefore, from the bewildering maze, and constitutionally inclining to the side of charity, she now decided that she ought never to rely upon a disadvantageous report of a person, since in the present instance such implicit reliance had rendered her unjust.

Alicia could not suppose it possible for a man conscious of wilful, deliberate sin to express himself as Lord St. Lawrence had just done upon sacred subjects; thus proving his sincerity by his conduct, she

was led to surmise that part of Lady Donnington's representations might be correct, and Princess Azorinski be indeed a light-minded wife, from whose snares it might be well for Lord St. Lawrence that he had escaped unhurt.

In this temper towards him, she suffered him to assist her in alighting from the carriage, and to sit next her during the church service, without showing that uneasy desire of withdrawing from his close vicinity which he had remarked, though unknowing how to account for it; and which, in fact, arose from delicacy and right principle. He set the seal to his good purposes, in her opinion, by merely handing both ladies into their carriage after the service ended, and walking directly homeward. The next night Alicia knew she should meet Lady Lilias Vavasour at a musical party; and, for the first time, she resolved to ask her about Lord St. Lawrence.

Lady Lilias was not the best counsellor she could have chosen; she was neither very clever nor very cautious; she was

merely cheerful, kind-hearted, and sincere, — but she was the only young woman that had braved the danger of constant comparison with Alicia's lovely face, by constant companionship in public, and she was the only one of whom Alicia felt secure. Whenever Lady Lilias seconded her own inclination to disbelieve an ill-natured story, she never hesitated to reject it altogether.

How lamentable is it when youth is the guide of youth ! — how frequently do they lead each other astray, while desirous of promoting each other's progress in the right course ! sometimes scorning that course, only because it is the safest; and aiming at dangerous elevation, without reflecting, that every height has its proportionate precipice. Lady Lilias Vavasour, with far greater facilities for fathoming the bottom of every evil story than Alicia possessed, had an equal inclination for doubting whatever made against another; she went even farther than Alicia, and in the warmth of zeal for what she called calumniated human nature, made

one or two persons the scape-goats upon whom she laid the sins of every scandal. Thus, whenever she heard a slanderous tale much insisted upon by one of those persons, she totally discredited it, repeating her opinion upon just as slight authority as the propagators of the calumny had for their narratives.

Lady Donnington's selfish cold-heartedness being particularly disliked by her, she could with difficulty hear in silence Alicia's occasional expressions of obligation to that lady. But as neither Lady Lilias's intimacy with Miss Barry nor her knowledge of her connections authorized her in free speaking on this subject, she contented herself with evading joining in the praise. This delicate reserve gave way before indignation, when Alicia and she met at the concert, and they got a little undisturbed conversation before their several admirers came in to molest them.

Alicia ingenuously related her Sunday's adventure with Lord St. Lawrence, and her consequent hope that his former

attraction to the house of Prince Azorinski had not been of a nature to warrant the opinion Lady Donnington had of the Princess's regard for him.

Lady Lilias cried out against the scandal, entering immediately into a defence of the lady as well as the gentleman; and though owning, that, from her father not being in the ministerial set, she only knew Prince and Princess Azorinski as they were to be seen in large parties, she knew that they lived on the happiest terms together, and were intimately tied with some of the very first families of character in the three kingdoms; that, except by Lady Donnington, and a few like her, who had been jealous of Madame Azorinski, the latter's conduct had never been questioned a single moment: and as for Lord St. Lawrence's share in the odium, if Miss Barry's informant had grounded her doubt of his principles upon the Princess's presumed passion for him, she was proved to be wrong by the perfect good humour with which the amiable foreigner saw his Lordship

transfer his attentions from herself to another; and, convicted of a false judgment upon one occasion, her Ladyship might very fairly be set down as not trustworthy upon another.

The result was, that both Lady Lilias and her gentle listener came to this conclusion: — Lord St. Lawrence was to be considered fully acquitted and cleared of imputed guilt, and was to be allowed free opportunities of making his better qualities speak for themselves.

There is a generous propensity in amiable youth to overpay a sufferer for past injustice. When guided by judicious and experienced relatives, or under higher guidance still, this propensity may be turned to the noblest uses. Alicia, entirely unprovided with the first, and but imperfectly seeking the other, followed the impulse of her own soft nature; and when Lord St. Lawrence entered the room at this critical moment, turned her eyes towards him with an expression of interest and approbation.

It was the first time Lord St. Law-

rence had seen her look so at any man; no wonder it should disorder him for a few instants. He waited while the brief transport was dispersing, ere he began the duty of speaking to the lady of the house; then going to Lady Donnington; and, finally, of securing a place by the side of the two intimates.

Although Lord St. Lawrence, by incessant watching of Alicia's countenance when she conversed with others, and by thinking over every thing he heard of or from her, was surprisingly well acquainted with the great outlines of her character, she scarcely knew more of him than that he was an elegant-looking young man, with a graceful figure and sweet expression of face. She was, therefore, agreeably surprised now, when in this lighter style of conversation than that which first drew her attention to him, she found him of a much higher order of intellect than she gave any man credit for, whom she saw idling away the hours in mere amusements.

Though the trifles going on round

them, between the short pieces of music, formed the key-notes of nearly all Lord St. Lawrence said, the talent and habit of seeing and saying differently from other people, which particularly distinguished him, gave variety and character to what would else have been insipid. Lady Lilias bore her part with much vivacity: Alicia was not yet quite at her ease with the man she had hitherto shunned and never once suspected of admiration for herself, and believing him fully occupied with the sisters (for Lady Hyacinth had somehow joined them), she rarely spoke but in varying smiles.

Lord St. Lawrence, however, had now effected his secret object without visible effort. Hitherto Miss Barry's quiet avoidance of him had rendered it impossible for him to begin winning upon her regard; but from this evening he had made himself a sort of right to go up to her in any society, and attach himself to her side as he was now doing to that of Lady Lilias Vavasour.

This was fortunate, since the whole

Vavasour family were going upon the Continent, and he would then lose his unconscious and valuable spy upon the character he was studying. Very soon after this evening, they quitted Brighton, leaving Alicia wholly destitute of a female friend.

Although the Brighton fashion of visiting, amongst the very first class, consists of little social sets at certain pleasant houses, not in great assemblies, Lady Donnington always gave a check to intimacies between persons she chose to keep in subjection. It was her determination to be absolute in every thing. Nothing would have offended her more highly than to have had her *protegée* taken out of her hand (as she would have termed it) by any impertinent young lady or officious matron. Thus she never saw any advances made to Miss Barry by women equally excellent and exalted, without nipping the acquaintance in the bud by some misrepresentation of their motives, or by showing her that she must not think of going

where she was not going also. Alicia was, therefore, alternately induced or obliged to decline several kind invitations to domesticate for a morning or an evening in a real family circle that would at once have revived her best ideas of blameless enjoyment and exercised affections; and left to fancy and to regret, that all born in the world of rank and fashion were self-condemned to the incessant labour "of killing time."

In the land of fashion, like other lands, there are, however, different sets, of different characters and different habits. The traveller in both, must depend upon his conductor for the impressions he may receive there. If he goes with a companion of lawless principles, he returns and pronounces all the women of that country unworthy: has he a different associate, he comes back and unfeignedly eulogizes their modesty and virtue. Thus Alicia, restrained from the society of those who never gave more of their time to pleasure than she occasionally saw them do in the small evening parties,

could not but imagine they spent the whole of their day as worthlessly as others did.

Lady Lilias Vavasour was, of course, excepted from this sweeping conclusion; and she might have fought hard for permission to join in her morning avocations, had she ever been invited to do so. But the Lady Vavasours' parents were wary, discreet persons, resolute in never receiving any one at their house whom they would object to as a connection. They had two or three prudent reasons for refusing to let their eldest daughter turn her favourite ball-acquaintance into a friend. They had an only son on his return from Italy; they had ascertained the fortune of Colonel Barry; and they were not a little disappointed at Lord St. Lawrence for his indifference to their Beauty. Such cool observers soon suspected the cause of this indifference.

Alicia had often felt pained by the seeming disproportion of her partiality for Lady Lilias when compared with hers. Yet hoping to be at last admitted

to greater intimacy than she could enjoy in mere pleasure parties, she had continued going to them all, principally to meet her, and to experience the relief of partly opening her locked-up heart to one inclined for sympathy. When Lady Lilias bade her farewell, though it was with tears and many a kindly-expressed wish, she did not ask to hear from her. Alicia was afflicted at this omission, and could not recover from the pain it caused, until Lord St. Lawrence told her how pathetically Lady Lilias had lamented to him her removal from her new friend, as her father particularly discountenanced girls' correspondence. This explanation at once satisfied and soothed Alicia, and though she understood the Vavasours would be absent for a year or two, she indulged the hope that, upon their return, she and Lady Lilias might renew their intimacy.

Hitherto she had put so deep an interest into her meetings with Lady Lilias, that now the latter was gone, the gay quadrille, or playful *jeux de société*, which vary Brighton winter parties, and supply

the place of London's crowded assemblies, were utterly tasteless. It is true, a feverish excitement went with her everywhere, making her feel restless while out of society, simply from having lost the habit of concentrating her mind upon quiet occupations: but as yet she had no especial object of pursuit to mar or make enjoyment for her, as she had been told would be the case after a short time; going to balls not for the sake of dancing, and to concerts not in the hope of hearing fine music, but to seek some one, to meet that one, to be all absorbed by that one; or to miss some valued person, and, caring for nobody else, come away vexed or disappointed. This was not her case, since she had no longer the expectation of meeting Lady Lilias Vavasour; yet did she feel conscious, that she was blooming and shedding her innocent sweets upon a tainting air; withering more and more, while shrinking less and less from its pernicious breath.

Alicia's imagination caused her to ascribe qualities to Lady Lilias which the

latter did not possess; therefore she believed that had she preserved such a kind andjudicious companion, her course would have been smoothed. She considered herself left in a giddy whirl, where not one redeeming feeling could be called forth by way of set-off against the consciousness of incessant dissipation.

Alicia had the faults incident to gentleness of character, when left solely to nature: — timidity in action and opinion; hesitation of purpose, when pain to others is the possible consequence of decision; and something of that moral cowardice which may be harassed into abandoning the outworks of great principles. Conscience, however, was so tender in her still, that she regretted every one of her sins of commission or omission, although firm resistance against future assaults of the same kind was daily becoming more difficult to her.

This had been instanced by her repugnance to flaring through every sabbath as if it were man's ordinance, to be used for his entertainment, yet doing it after

all:—it had been instanced by her having discontinued going to church when Lady Donnington went not, and would not spare her the carriage; because that in walking thither, only followed by a servant, she was so watched for by the inferior classes, that she could not stand the stinging pleasantries about the number and quality of her admirers, which met her at her return:—it was yet further instanced by her increased uneasiness under the utter uselessness of her present life (to say no worse of it), and her increasing feebleness in resisting her mother's false arguments when employed in her letters to make her happy and yielding.

Alicia, indeed, could not shut her eyes upon the criminal waste of time to which she was now positively tasked by the caprice of a self-called friend, and what seemed to her the senseless ambition of her mother. She literally wasted nearly the whole of every day. Late hours at night, in consequence of very late dining, had long demolished the valuable practice of early rising; and when she rose,

it was to loiter over a breakfast-table, where Lady Donnington often kept her momentarily expecting her for an hour or two, and from which there was no moving until the presiding deity chose to go. After that, notes were to be answered that had meanwhile been pouring in, and usurping the conversation by their petty subjects. Invitations were to be given, or accepted, or refused; plans of amusement arranged; dresses considered; morning visitors seen.

Alicia, as secretary, (the province of most young ladies who write an elegant hand) spent half the day at this uninteresting business, in which she was, however, perpetually interrupted by new suggestions of Lady Donnington's, or by ridiculous interpolations proposed by one or other of the many male idlers who seemed born for no other purpose than to knock once a day at the door of Lady Donnington's house, and to say agreeable nothings before its mistress.

Then followed riding, driving, promenading, practising new quadrilles or new

music; lounging into libraries or on the disagreeable beach; all the ceaseless varieties, in short, of sea-side sauntering. After that again, the hurrying home to dine and dress for the late tea-party, which, though neither so stifling as the routs, nor so intoxicating as the balls of our metropolis, has its own sort of inebriation: the night drained like the day of all its refreshing sweetness, — tired limbs, jaded spirits, an aching head, — often a sick heart. So ended nearly every day and night with those who lived under Lady Donnington's roof.

Alicia could not register such days and nights, when noting them down in the journal kept for her mother, without mourning over their emptiness. At Castle Barry she well knew she had had pleasures, but they were simple ones; such as the full hand of nature provides, and the guileless, happy heart finds all-sufficient: — pleasures far above those invented by man, which prove their insipidity, by never being received with any thankfulness by those who most frequently ban-

quet on them: Heaven's bounties, on the contrary, when truly relished, are vividly acknowledged; and gratitude itself is an additional pleasure.

At Castle Barry Alicia knew she was not only happy but useful. Sick servants, failing labourers, motherless children, whom she had herself ministered to when no one else cared to do it, could testify to this pleasing remembrance, — to say nothing of her domestic duties cheerfully performed, and elegant studies regularly pursued. Here, she did nothing useful: she knew not where to seek objects of distress, and if she did, Lady Donnington would not have heard of her doing it in person. And if when giving casual alms from the carriage window, she was moved to know more of the beggar's circumstances, she could only employ her maid or her man; the first was out of the question, from not speaking a word of English; and the second was too fine a gentleman to trouble himself further than ending the matter at once by a convenient falsehood. The poor petitioner was

always reported to have been an impostor; and though Alicia sometimes doubted her servant's performance of her commission, or his truth in stating the result, she had no means of discovering the cruelly selfish cheat.

Of one thing, however, such vexations convinced her, — that a life which so thoroughly absorbs every power of the body and soul, which makes it impossible for the best-disposed mind to think seriously for five minutes together, and the kindest heart to practise deeds of charity, cannot be the life which God approves, and man was created for. She felt, too, that such a life, long pursued, unfits the person habituated to it for the enjoyment and performance of those sacred duties which may be resumed, but which will be found hard of exercise, after the habit of dissipating thought has been once established.

"Country life for our home — town life for rare holiday!" she often sighed to herself as she turned on her uneasy pillow, after frivolous evenings, during which she had not met one interesting

person. Her circle of intimates was so small, and she was beginning to see so much rivalry, ill-nature, envy, and selfishness under such fair exteriors, that the void left by Lady Lilias Vavasour in her regard, seemed destined for Lord St. Lawrence to fill.

He began his approaches to intimacy by talking to her of her absent friend. Alicia listened to such a theme with pleasure, especially as he could tell her the movements of the Vavasour family abroad: he next spoke of her own relations, managing to evince interest in them unmixed with curiosity: then he introduced himself, mingling, as he related anecdotes of his travels, confessions of former thoughtlessness and present regret, with the most picturesque descriptions and romantic histories. Thus, alternately delighting and interesting, he won insensibly upon the feelings of Alicia, teaching her to consider him as one like herself, born for better things than he was doing, full of fine aspirations, high desires, good purposes, and refined sensibilities, yet conscious to the crimi-

nality of having mis-spent time, and contracted injurious habits. Quick and keen is the interest excited by confessions of faultiness, where the penitent is young enough to have his inexperience taken into the account for palliation; and though they sometimes prove delusive, they are generally too sincere when uttered to be suspected.

Of all modes of interesting, none is so seductive and so sure: — sympathy with the offender, admiration of his candour, approval of his good intentions, perhaps the mental enjoyment of listening to pathetic or impassioned language, and the unconscious pleasure of being singled out for such a confidence, all conspire to render it dangerous. Let such confidences, then, be ever received with trembling and distrust, by soft and tender woman; let her guard her heart well against taking too deep an interest in the reformation of the erring professor: ever remembering that confession is not amendment; that the finest moral taste, and liveliest admiration of virtue, may be

coupled with passions unbroken by the only power that can control their impetuosity; and that we rarely confess sins, except in prayer, when we really consider them with the shame and remorse which we would have believed.

Once excited to interest in Lord St. Lawrence by these occasional conversations, Alicia listened to what she had hitherto been inattentive to — his character when canvassed by others. She read a speech he made in the House of Lords, at the opening of the session; and she took the evidence of his benevolently-bright countenance. Friends and enemies spoke of him as the magnificent patron of all the arts, and as a promoter of every charity as well as pleasure. His eloquence in the senate had been exerted in favour of humanity; and his expression of countenance when he smiled was so sweet and happy, that it obliterated the effect of another expression often seen there—dark, brooding thought. She could not believe, she did not believe, that such a smile ever came from a bad heart or

bad temper. She could imagine Lord St. Lawrence yielding to temptation, never deliberately seeking forbidden things of any kind; and it was to the remembrance of such human frailty alone that she imputed that occasional look of gloomy unquiet.

In some of their conversations during rides, when his Lordship contrived to keep her and himself either much before or much behind the others of Lady Donnington's party, she gathered from him, first playfully, then seriously, that his religious education was defective; and catching at some of his expressed doubts, as the key to all his self-dissatisfaction and inability to be what he wished, she incautiously undertook to impart to him what she had been taught by Rose M'Manus and Jocelyn Hastings.

The man who had so kindly effected a change in Lady Donnington's Sunday habits, and who rather expressed a desire of becoming more worthy the name of Christian, than boasted a belief that reason was competent to guide us alone to peace

and purity — that man was surely worthy of some benevolent exertion. Alicia's motive was, in fact, so pure, and Lord St. Lawrence had so long acted the part of entire devotion to Lady Donnington, that her *protegée* did not for a moment suppose herself the attraction; she therefore saw no harm or impropriety in aiding a fellow-creature's sincere efforts to become wiser and better; believing herself benefited by conversations, however short, and merely shadowed out, which necessarily brought her own deficiencies more strikingly before her.

It was the error of youth — compassionate, zealous, imprudent, inconsiderate of self, and foolishly apt to imagine that all it wished to do, it ought to do; but it was an error, and might have been fatal to her peace or her respectability, had Lord St. Lawrence been less honourable, and more confident that she was interested in him from a tenderer cause than mere benevolence.

As it was, doubtful of having any power over her, and anxious to acquire it, the

young Earl now began to throw all her other admirers at a distance, by the steadiness with which he followed her. Long before Alicia was aware of the report, or in the least suspicious of her influence over this courted personage, every one was speculating upon Lord St. Lawrence's conduct; wondering whether it would not end in his making a fool of her, "or whether she had any reason for believing him serious."

Lady Donnington, to whom the question was sometimes insinuated, and sometimes broadly put, sincerely professed entire ignorance of the gentleman's plans, and the young lady's expectations; unvaryingly repeating, "I never interfere: I regularly let people go their own way. If Lord St. Lawrence means any thing, he will write to Miss Barry's father; and if he don't, Miss Barry is too sensible to commit herself." What Lady Donnington meant by the word *commit*, thus used, is doubtful; it was capable of so many interpretations: every hearer construed it to their own liking. One said, her

Ladyship gave them to understand that Miss Barry was cool-headed, and knew how to keep her heart cool also, for the sake of advantage; another said, it was intended to *show her up* as ungratefully close to her great friend the Countess; a third averred, that it proved Miss Barry was practised in the art of appearing innocently unconscious, when in reality angling for several good offers at the same time; and a few others took the ground of supposing she had won away his Lordship from Lady Lilias Vavasour, therefore must be looked upon as an undermining, deceitful person.

It did not suit Lady Donnington either to apprise Alicia of the circulating report, or to show Lord St. Lawrence that she knew such a one existed: she neither wanted to hurry on nor to hurry off a match between them; sufficient for her that the current of fashion was again setting strongly towards herself, instead of to Princess Azorinski. That dreaded foreigner once out of England, an event said to be in immediate prospect, and

Donnington House blazing anew with all the London world, its selfish mistress would not care what mortification or elevation awaited her *protegée.* Alicia, therefore, uninformed and unwarned, was left wholly without a pilot upon an unknown and treacherous ocean; smooth to the eye, dark and storm-brooding below. She was daily made sensible of her own attractions by the looks and language of several men, who were either struggling against or rushing into violent passions for her. Yet, happily, she had a delicacy of such shrinkingness, that none of them could ever entrap her into the semblance of a flirtation with them. She was in danger of incurring that imputation solely on Lord St. Lawrence's account; the very man, whom, of all others, she considered but as one disposed to friendship for her, and for whose mixed character she felt only a sort of benevolent interest. A whisper of compliment from Lord St. Lawrence had never reached her ear; and whenever he sat with her apart after a quadrille, or during a ride or walk

managed to secure a sort of *tête-à-tête* between them, his conversation was always either serious, or purely upon matters of taste. During these conversations he was flattered by finding how easily the humility of his fair companion made her bend to his stronger mind, upon every subject where intellect and information were to decide; and better pleased to observe how firmly (though timidly as to manner) she maintained such opinions as are inseparable from a right principle. Complacency, then, would have been fatal to her power over him.

In return, Alicia was grateful, for Lord St. Lawrence's own sake, to perceive that he was sincere in his wish, of settling and strengthening certain convictions which had of late pressed upon his heart. He read every book she recommended, when she blushingly owned that she had neither the ability nor the presence of mind to repeat all the arguments they had taught her in support of what she wished him convinced of; and he often gratified her by showing that

they had enlarged and confirmed his best views. Thus gravely occupied by him, even in scenes of gaiety, she came insensibly to treat him with a sweet familiarity, which she believed to be solely the consequence of his frequent, nay, continual domestication at Lady Donnington's house; but which he began to translate into the thrilling hope of a dawning affection.

Mrs. Barry's folly first checked this free intercourse. She had exacted a journal from her daughter, to be forwarded through one of the foreign offices. The contents of these journals — innuendoes, and admiring sentences in newspapers, English gossip carried into Parisian society, and the assertions of some correspondent of the Miss Ponsonbys, made this unwise mother believe her daughter certain of being a countess. In the full flood of her expectations, one day she wrote almost a congratulatory letter to her daughter, owning that such a marriage had ever been the secret wish of Colonel Barry and herself; and that,

under existing circumstances, it was a perfect Providence, as it would at once remove all obstacles to family comfort, and open bright prospects to their banished son.

Alicia would have smiled at her mother's misapprehension, as she believed it, about Lord St. Lawrence, had she not grieved at the sure disappointment which must follow such ill-grounded expectations, and had not an allusion to newspaper paragraphs made her return with trepidation to one which had met her eye that very morning. At the moment she had barely glanced over, without comprehending it: now she looked for the paper, and with a kindling cheek read as follows:—"It will surprise the world of fashion, and of the fine arts, to learn, that a certain young nobleman, distinguished in both, is said to be in treaty, not for the original exquisite picture of the Marcella, now on sale at Christie's, but for a beautiful copy by some obscure hand, lately brought over from a sister country. We

hear that every amateur is in astonishment at this circumstance, knowing that the original might be bought for a fraction of what is demanded for the inferior Marcella."

Alicia laid aside the paper with trembling and alarm. She was not the more tempted to believe in Lord St. Lawrence's inclination for her; but she was led to see the imprudence of acting naturally in artificial society. Lookers on, had evidently never given either of them credit for the calm rationality which she fancied was equally the character of their attraction to each other in the small Brighton parties; and envy or mere ill-nature had chosen to represent her as inferior certainly to the set in which she was now moving.

Pride, delicacy, conscious purity of motive, and innate abhorrence of coquetry, made her start from the report which this newspaper insinuated. It was impossible for her to doubt who was meant, and what was meant; yet she could not complain of it, since her own

indiscretion and softness had given too plausible a pretext for the inference evidently drawn from her frequent association with Lord St. Lawrence. And the preposterous profuseness of her expenses almost invited the derisive tone in which her inferiority of condition was noticed.

At first, she shed tears of mixed humiliation and resentment; then rejoiced that Lord St. Lawrence was gone for a few days to London, to attend a call of the House of Peers, and that probably he would be too much occupied to read the chit-chat columns of any daily journal: finally, she came to the decision, that from this moment she must avoid that intimate companionship with him in particular which had laid her open to these cruel remarks, and which Lord St. Lawrence would assuredly dislike to have thus interpreted into a purpose of which he too was innocent.

Alicia's heart was in tumults. She wished to act rightly, and she dreaded acting too precipitately. She felt that a judicious friend to act for her, and place

her out of sight while efforts were made to efface this unfounded and injurious report, was what she ought to seek. But where was she to find such an one? Lady Lilias Vavasour was gone, and Lady Donnington withered every thing like confidence. Whenever Alicia's tremulous voice betokened a mustering of her spirits for some communication concerning herself, that lady adroitly managed to introduce some observation unfavourable to what she termed the habit of egotism, repeating, "I never could endure your secret-tellers, and I never pry into other people's concerns — I have no curiosity."

Such expressions silenced without satisfying. Youthful sensibility truly taught, that having no curiosity was, in fact, having no human interest; that a lively concern for the moral and temporal welfare of our fellow-creatures is natural to most hearts, and is commanded to all, by the authority of our gracious religion. Youthful diffidence, however, had not the hardihood to utter this warranted opi-

nion, and the discouraged spirit retired therefore within itself.

The chief of the difficulties which she thus wished to be guided through by some kind and experienced hand, was her embarrassment how to silence certain professing admirers, whose familiar *entrée* at the marine villa left her ear always at their mercy, and who yet came not to such distinct declarations as warranted her in requiring their acceptance of a decided negative; and how to act by certain young married women from whom she was every day sensible of receiving the bitterest insults under a mask of pleasantry. A word from Lady Donnington to them all, seemed as if it would have protected her completely; but Lady Donnington had more than once stopped her pathetic representations with the satirical exclamation of—"How very distressing to be so very handsome, my dear Miss Barry!" Could any young and bashful nature persevere in the conversation? Alicia wept her painful, profitless beauty; for to her

it seemed only the cause of grief, persecution, and mortification: it surrounded her with admirers, — but had she any friends? Where were they to be found, except in the few across the Atlantic, and the poor cotters in her own country, who would have loved the hand that ministered to them, equally well, whether fair or withered? It exposed her to imputations of which she knew herself undeserving, and could only indemnify her by affording the triumph of vanity; a triumph she abhorred both from feeling and principle.

Her mother, to whom alone she could confide her uncomfortable feelings, treated them as morbid and absurd, silencing complaints against the wasteful use of money, which her present situation forced her into, by light entreaties that she would leave her parents to judge what they could or could not afford, and not by any rash changes cause people to imagine that some humiliating misfortune had happened to their affairs.

From the tenor of Mrs. Barry's present

letter, Alicia at once concluded that her mother had from the first been deceived by her wishes, and supposing Lord St. Lawrence's visits at the marine villa solely intended for her daughter, had therefore left her to contend with the many minor evils of her association with Lady Donnington. It accounted for her slighter notice of every other pretender to her daughter's favour; and the latter thought that could she but remove this delusion, she would no longer find her mother deaf to her entreaties of being permitted to join her in France.

Animated by this hope, which if realised would spare her the torture of partly explaining her feelings to the most worldly and cold-hearted woman on earth, she endeavoured to quiet the throbs of shame and indignation which kept swelling in her heart throughout the day; and when she joined Lady Donnington after dinner (the latter having dined in her own dressing-room, as was often her capricious custom), she

was composed enough outwardly, to escape narrow scrutiny.

Lady Donnington's salutation was a sort of outcry at a tulle-dress, which she chose to call utterly spoiled; adding, that unless Miss Barry were less penurious, it would be impossible for her to go about in London like other people: that she must positively write to Mrs. Barry and ask for a fresh order on the banker, otherwise every thing would soon come to a stop.

Alicia seized upon the plea thus offered, and reminding her Ladyship, that her mother seemed to have understood her child's expenses would be limited to the sum she had left for her use, timidly urged her own abhorrence of further imposing upon her parents' generosity, and her personal dislike of expending so much money upon dress and amusements. She stammered out many grateful acknowledgments for all her Ladyship's kind acts and kinder purposes; but ventured to say, with some decision, that she thought it must now be evident that it

was her duty to resist the temptation of accompanying her Ladyship to London.

Lady Donnington's momentary irritation sparkled from her eyes, and tingled to her very fingers' ends; but she quelled it: London was not to be tried without Miss Barry. For the first time since she had condescended to exercise sovereignty over her, she stooped to use a bait for securing her aid. "So!" she exclaimed, affecting the pathetic; "you would leave me in the very heat of the battle, after you have made yourself so delightful, and so impossible to be parted with! How unkind of you, my dear Miss Barry! And what is to become of all your admirers, open and concealed?—from Harvey Stapylton, with Fenelon's Telemachus always in his pocket, creased down at the page of Eucharis, to my Lord St. Lawrence, with that little sentimental bit of Marcella riband, by way of watch chain?"

The blush which this caressing reproach brought to the very eyes of Alicia, was not the herald of delighted conscious-

ness, as her hearer supposed, but the flush of sudden apprehension. Lady Donnington had never before given a single hint of this nature; she had hitherto appeared to appropriate Lord St. Lawrence entirely to herself. Her present words, however light, were either declarative of a different opinion, or were meant falsely to propitiate her young companion's vanity; and Alicia, all palpitating and agitated, besought her to remember that she had from the first disclaimed any thought of Lord St. Lawrence, except as her Ladyship's friend and devoted follower: adding, "I know there are persons who fancy me foolish enough to believe otherwise;—I am most earnest to escape from such insulting suppositions. Until to-day I did not quite understand many things that have been said to me;—now I do:—and I wish, therefore, for your leave, dear madam, to go to my mother."

Alicia's hand fluctuated, as she would have drawn the offensive paragraph from her pocket, which she had torn out of

the paper. Lady Donnington's instantly cold air withered her purpose.

"Well!" she exclaimed, "if you are tired of me — if you find me so very disagreeable! — Not a word by way of civility! — I am not the least vexed at you. Your mother shall decide this knotty point between us. I will write and tell her what you wish; and her answer, of course, will say whether I am to have the real pleasure of taking you about in London, or how I am to send you properly to her."

The last sentence was said with a return of good-humour; and Alicia felt as if such briefness of displeasure stamped herself ungrateful. She answered with emotion, expressing this sentiment, and thus showing Lady Donnington how easily a generous nature may be warped from steadiness, if left unsupported.

"You have no right to make yourself more amiable, since you are determined to leave me!" interrupted her Ladyship, increasing her companion's compunctious feeling, while aware of her own deliberate

intention to thwart her right inclinations. "Let us end the subject. Do you go and sing to me; and I will take to my dear sofa for a quarter of an hour, before people come in."

Lady Donnington received her friends every evening, whether she did or did not go afterwards to other houses. Society amongst a certain description of persons is upon a much easier footing than that of secondary ranks: thus idlers went and came, or were turned out, indifferently. Sometimes nothing was resorted to but conversation; at other times, forfeits, *bouts-rimés*, acted charades, &c. music or dancing frittered away the greatest part of night. Alicia had never taken a greater share in the musical parties than playing duets or accompanying a singer, as her voice always failed when agitated; and Lady Donnington, having no occasion for more charms in her fair lure, contented herself with profiting now and then by her ability to sing a favourite air, when quite familiarized to her auditors.

On the present occasion she stretched herself along the couch, by way of resting a sprained foot, while Alicia, assured that she was either going to sleep or wholly indifferent about the music, began and went nearly through the pretty ballad of "Isabel" (then just popular) with the pathos of a voice singing only to itself and to memory. She had often sung that air with its original words, when learning Spanish of Jocelyn Hastings;—sung it to the guitar he had tuned! Tears crowded into her eyes, and her voice first saddening, then swelling imperfectly, at once failed her:—she stopped; her fingers resting on the keys of the piano, and her eyes fixed on vacancy.

Unexpected music, if in the least agreeable, has always more effect than a superior kind, when anticipated and waited for. Let any one recall his lively pleasure at the sudden strain of a horn, or of a voice, passing by on the water, or breaking upon the stillness of a solitary walk, and say, whether his emotion was

not far more pleasurable than that which a regular concert excites!

Whether it were from this common cause, or really from uncommon sweetness in the soft sighing tones of Alicia, or from the touching expression she gave to the words of the air she sang, may not be determined; but one or all arrested the steps of Lord St. Lawrence as he entered the ante-room, whence he advanced, after a moment's pause, exclaiming, "O do not stop, Miss Barry!" Alicia, however, rose on the instant in a tremor, merely from having been caught singing, and somewhat startled by his Lordship's appearance. The confusion created by this detection, and a consciousness of thoughts which she never indulged without after-repentance, heightened the surprise and apprehension occasioned by Lord St. Lawrence's quick return from London. She was all embarrassment; so that his Lordship was excusable for placing the blushes, the hurried breathing, and trembling movements to his own account: had she raised

her timid eyes, she could not have mistaken the expression of his. He moved away, however, to the sofa upon which Lady Donnington was yet half recumbent, where he was soon busied in condoling with her accident, and settling her footstool.

Lady Charles Everleigh, who had followed close upon his Lordship, joined their party, and one or two other persons coming in soon afterwards, Lady Donnington begged Miss Barry would have the goodness to make tea. Alicia hastened to obey.

" Mercy on us! you are going to have an assembly!" cried Lady Charles, always upon the fret at something. " I came for a visit of charity to your sprained ancle, while Caroline is dressing for Lady Forsyth's: — I had no notion you were to have crowds; — and every body believed Lord St. Lawrence was in London; and here he is in his place. Truly, my Lord," she added, facing round upon him with equal ill-humour, " you are an example for the whole peerage! I never

knew a man so constant to his duty. I am told there have not been above half a dozen bills carried through the upper house with your Lordship's name in the proxy list. Of course parliament is up, or prorogued, or something, by your coming back amongst us so soon."

"Spare me, Lady Charles!" was the half-playful yet rather embarrassed answer. "I plead guilty to being much too fond of Brighton."

"Oh, I dare say!—However, you will contrive to live out of it when all your favourites are gone. You will go to London when Lady Donnington goes, of course?"

"Of course," repeated the smiling Earl, recovering his complexion.

"And you are to give us all sorts of pleasant things at your new house!—What are they to be?"

"All sorts of pleasant things," echoed his Lordship.

"Oh!" with a long breath which made the elegant aspiration sound very much like the rustic ejaculation of *humph*. "You *were* to have opened your house

with a grand concert, I was told; but now I hear it is to be a ball."

"Now it is to be a ball!" provokingly persevered the echo.

"I don't think that quite sure, for all you say so," resumed Lady Charles, glancing significantly at Alicia. "You are so good-natured, that you will like to show off your friends to advantage: so if any particular one sings better than they dance, good bye to our ball."

The echo was silent. Lady Donnington was speechless with laughter.

"Will any lady do the honours for you?" asked her cross Ladyship.

"Will any lady do the honours for me?" pathetically questioned her echoer, turning towards the sofa.

"Oh! then Lady Donnington is to be your Lady Patroness?"

Lord St. Lawrence repeated her words with a bow of graceful gallantry, and the exulting Countess, stretching out her hand in token of pleased assent, in one moment was settled, what had never entered Lord St. Lawrence's thoughts be-

fore, that he should give a few great parties in London, and have five or six female friends of a certain age, to enact the mistress of the revels on separate evenings. Lady Charles Everleigh grew furious; so furious that she ceased to have any command over herself; and, in her eager prophecy that Lady Donnington would be embroiled for the whole season with every body Lord St. Lawrence excluded from his parties, afforded him a happy opportunity of regretting that after such an opinion he could never dare to solicit Lady Charles Everleigh to invite or receive his company.

"I don't know how you will manage with your Polish Princess," she resumed with fresh bitterness.—No one spoke.—"As she and Lady Donnington do not visit, it may be awkward. You had much better marry, my Lord, and give us some new person at once; then none of us will quarrel for the lead."

"It would be the height of my ambition to be quarrelled for," said his Lordship, with provoking raillery. More and more vexed by his commanded counte-

nance, and by what she thought the positive apathy of Alicia, for whose ear she meant the words, "better marry," Lady Charles muttered something about practised tempers, pretty images, lifeless dolls, &c., and abruptly going up to the tea-table, asked if Miss Barry had ever heard of Lady Baskerville's bread-and-butter parties? The expected negative enabled her to pour out another torrent of black bile, much to the amusement of the two or three persons laughing and talking to Lady Donnington.

"Oh! I should have thought you had been brought up in the house, you make tea so like those girls. You have quite got their taking way of bending and bowing over the cups; and your work by you there, just like them, by way of looking Homeish.—What excellent things those bread and butter parties were, Lady Donnington!" (raising her voice and looking back at the sofa). "You remember how we all laughed at them when they began: but they quite answered. Lady Baskerville got off all her Louisa-La-

vinias, and Sophia-Susannahs. Two Dukes and two Earls! — Lord St. Lawrence would have been quite worthy of those parties: don't you think so, Miss Barry?" Alicia, not knowing what to say, merely bent her head in sign of polite attention. Her angry interrogator once more looked back towards the sofa. "Pray, Lady Donnington, does your young lady speak only a certain quantity in the day? —We have just found out that she has plenty of breath for singing wonderfully; but, as often as I have had the honour of being in her company, I have never been able to extract ten words out of her."

Alicia, who was presenting her with some tea, smiled, while she blushed; enquiring whether to be accused of silence were not a very flattering compliment to a woman? Lady Charles Everleigh eyed her from head to foot, first uttering another lumpish "oh!" and then exclaiming "extremely smart!" as one of the new-comers called out "bravo!" and left the sofa for the tea-table.

Alicia turned to him for relief and re-

fuge. Her increasing sense of Lady Charles Everleigh's meaning, and the recollection of that paragraph which had agitated her in the morning, making her scarcely able to conceal the bodily nervousness which both occasioned. What she began saying to this young man she knew not, nor what he answered: her distress, however, was obvious; and Lord St. Lawrence hastened to avert Lady Charles's catechising, by reclaiming her conversation.

"So you do me the honour of saying, that I should have been quite worthy of the Baskerville House parties? How very kind of you, Lady Charles! — But I was not so lucky: they were all over, and the Lady Baskervilles married, and their agreeable mother dead, before I left college. You would have liked them, Trevor (addressing the youth talking to Alicia); they were so exactly what we men fancy sometimes much pleasanter than great assemblies, where we are so often tired to death with being amused. The Baskervilles always stayed so late in town on

the old Lord's account, that they chose to live there after a sort of country fashion: a certain set, really of intimate friends, were privileged in walking in every evening out of the parks, or before they went to other societies, in hats and bonnets, where they found a regular, comfortable tea table ——"

"To say nothing of the trash-table in the corner, with sweeties and wash lemonade," interrupted Lady Charles, contemptuously. Lord St. Lawrence went on, after thanking her for the marginal note. — "At which sat two of the lovely Lady Baskervilles distributing tea, while the others sat at work, talking or getting up at a friend's request, to play and sing as girls do for their brothers. Unless any of them were going to a ball afterwards, nothing could be simpler than their dress; in short, the whole thing, Henry Maynard tells me, had such an air of home, that no man was taken there once, that did not try for admittance a second time."

"Yes, and was always *taken in!*" laughed out Lady Donnington, in a

raised tone. "Do forgive my little joke, Lord St. Lawrence."

"O, I think it is your Ladyship that has much to forgive!" exclaimed Lady Charles Everleigh exultingly, darting another black look at the innocent Alicia, for having attracted the young Earl into their circle. "Lord St. Lawrence is abusing large parties, and praising little poky tea-and-toast things!"

Lord St. Lawrence was not easily disconcerted. He smiled, and looked in the direction of the sofa. "E'en so, Lady Charles! — What must be the power that has either changed my natural taste, or makes me act contrary to it!"

"Well done, St. Lawrence!" from a gentleman; "Perfect, my Lord!" from Lady Donnington herself; and "Vastly well got out of!" from two other ladies, proclaimed Lady Charles Everleigh's discomfiture. The victor, however, was disappointed: Alicia's determinately-downcast eyes had rendered his expressive glance at her a vainly-shot arrow.

Lady Donnington was in high good

humour. "Those Baskerville House parties were really very amusing," she resumed lightly,—"the different people and different costumes were so entertaining. As I dined late, I always looked in, when I came from my morning drive. Sober folks, like the Duke and Duchess of Riverhill, stalked in after having taken their summer's evening walk: — other persons chatted away an hour or two on their way to the opera, or to the last Almack's. Lady Charles, will you ever forget her Grace of Riverhill's huge leather feet, when somebody got up a waltz? or Sir George Thoresby with his umbrella? and when we met him the next evening, composedly walking under it in the rain at Vauxhall, every other creature in full flight: — Oh, how very good!"

"Oh yes, very good indeed!" repeated Lady Charles. "Nobody, except Lady Baskerville, would have let a great wet umbrella be brought into a drawing-room; but she knew her cards, and she won the game. Sir George was known to have a pet nephew as well as a pet umbrella: it

was monstrous clever of her: I wonder if Lord Hamlyn suspects that he owes his wife to his uncle's umbrella?"

"I rather fancy he attributes it to the ordinary circumstance of his having been exceedingly in love with his wife," was Lord St. Lawrence's provoking remark. Even Alicia could not help directing a smile and an eyebeam towards him after he had said this. Lady Charles saw both that and the brightening effect. "It is quite a thing to grieve about," she resumed abruptly, "that your Lordship did not come in for one of the Lady Baskerville's, or at least for one of their mother's parties; but I dare say you will find plenty of people ready to oblige you, and get such parties up again for your accommodation."

"O certainly!" observed Lady Donnington in a master-tone of apparent unmeaningness, "any mother that is shrewd enough to see how well this plan answered formerly, is likely enough to try it for her own daughters now: particularly when such a *grande partie* is in

question. O, my Lord, you *must* hear horrid truths sometimes."

Lord St. Lawrence was now positively embarrassed: he tried to laugh off the effect of one lady's rude assault, and another's hardy pleasantry; and as Lady Charles hastily bade good night while new visitors were entering, retreated to the table where Sir Edgar Trevor was boyishly busy in assisting Alicia.

The impotent ill-humour of Lady Charles Everleigh afforded such inexhaustible amusement to her ordinary acquaintance, that although for ever irritating and insulting them, she was never *cut* by any one; but kept to be played with, as mischievous boys tease their dogs for the pleasure of seeing them snap and bite. The door had no sooner closed upon this unpopular personage, than Lady Donnington, with all the humour possible, began entertaining her party with an imitation of her Ladyship throughout the past scene; every now and then calling upon Lord St. Lawrence to bear witness to its accuracy, as he continued

bending over Alicia at the table where her duty of tea-making kept her almost stationary.

Young Trevor enjoyed the imitation of Lady Charles Everleigh so much, and went into such convulsions of laughter at the recollection of the passion she was in, that Alicia could not forbear from gently expressing her own sorrow to see any creature with such an unhappy temper; and her own notion that it was not right to assist in making a bad person worse,— that it was not humane to find pleasure in their torture. Lord St. Lawrence owned it was the same temper which made people fond of the combats of gladiators, and Spanish bull-fights.

"And will you not add bull-baiting?" asked Alicia with steady earnestness.

Sir Edgar Trevor started: "O no! not the least like those Roman and Spanish things: — they were fine manly diversions — all amongst gentlemen. — Bull-baiting is so low! so vulgar!"

Lord St. Lawrence undertook to prove that the same principle might be found

the origin of each: and having to do with an ingenuous mind, only too easy of conviction, therefore not very stable, gained the victory for Alicia's conscientious humanity.

"It would be happy for us chameleon creatures, who so often take our colour from the opinions of your sex," ejaculated Lord St. Lawrence as Sir Edgar sprung across the room at a summons from Lady Donnington, "if such kind trouble as you have just bestowed, Miss Barry, upon that fine boy, were oftener taken to correct us. I fear you would not show as much interest in one a few years older than he."

Lord St. Lawrence paused.—Alicia did not think it necessary to answer:—she was not yet herself: every variation of tone or look in her companion agitated her, because she could not help recurring perpetually to the paragraph about herself and his Lordship; trembling lest he guessed she had seen it, lest he believed her pleased with it, or lest he did indeed think of her with growing inclination.

Under cover of the incessant laughter produced at the farther end of the room by a task of doggrels set by Sir Edgar Trevor to a slow-witted person, Lord St. Lawrence continued talking most interestingly of himself, in a sort of confidential tone which his late habit of avowing unsettled opinions and new views warranted him in using to his uneasy auditor. But she heard him not as heretofore; and her varying complexion betrayed the change. Perhaps Lord St. Lawrence divined the cause of this emotion (for he, too, had seen the morning paper), and thrilling at the translation he made of it, pursued his confessions with softer earnestness.

Though frequently interrupted by occasional attendance upon Lady Donnington with tea, Lord St. Lawrence succeeded in sketching his family history. An early widowed father living abroad, first in a diplomatic character, then for health's sake: his own boyhood, meanwhile unrestrained by near kindred, and uncheered by having a home to come to;

his youth spent amongst gay foreigners, and often exiled from his father's sick room, yearning for the fire-side society of England, yet obliged to seek an equivalent in the *soirées* of France or the *conversaziones* of Italy.

Such was the brief tale he told, with a voice of dangerous, half-suffocated feeling. Alicia's generous sympathies were all awakened by it, her nearer interests laid asleep; and, gently regarding him, she said, "Surely you would find some charming families abroad, if not fire-side ones?"

"Too surely," was Lord St. Lawrence's reply, unaware of what he was saying; "but the man who domesticates himself in such as I have had experience of, is rarely so fortunate as the visitors of Lady Baskerville. Instead of a precious wife, he too often brings away bitter, bitter recollections."

Alicia's altered look recalled Lord St. Lawrence; and apprehensive that he might have awakened too clear an idea of his meaning, he added, with a smile —

"I myself fairly plead guilty to having many wrong notions (as you know) and worse habits to unlearn. This neglecting of serious duties for instance, of which Lady Charles Everleigh was so obliging as to remind me; this philandering away my time at Brighton, when I ought to have been through the whole sitting of Parliament in London. I fear (hesitating and keeping down his eyes) my case is hopeless, unless some gentle hand will undertake it."

Precisely at this embarrassing moment one of the loungers by the sofa, who had hitherto been kept back by the prevalent report of Lord St. Lawrence's serious attentions to Miss Barry, thinking ample time had been allowed him for one or two tender speeches, now approached to say, that if the reservoir of tea were not exhausted, he would supplicate for some, or else set up an opposition tea-table on the instant.

Every body of course laughed at this flippant threat, as was expected; while Alicia, happily called into action by the

demand, recommenced her employment; and as the snug coterie swelled to a dozen persons, her tea-making went on all the night; conversation becoming general, and lessening therefore Lord St. Lawrence's opportunities of creating an especial interest in himself.

What he had said, however, was not ineffective: while all were buzzing and trifling round her, Alicia felt a kind of companionship with his mind alone; simply because he had given her some glimpse of what every person possesses in a degree, — natural feeling. She was touched by his avowal of past and present error; little imagining to what extent he required indulgence, nor against how much dreaded, though not very probable exposure, he was trying to prepare her. And she could not help acknowledging that his manner to her on this evening was obviously particular. Her heart beat quicker at the thought; yet not pleasurably even now. A wish to escape, — a dread of being finally caught, — a faint hope that Lord St. Lawrence was merely

enjoying in her society at Lady Donnington's what he professed so much to like, were the paramount causes of that heart-fluttering. She endeavoured to avert his particularity by dividing her notice amongst several.

One of the last persons announced, was Lord Lewis Rivers, who, on arriving from a short tour in Germany, had been welcomed by the account of Lady Donnington's great friendship with Lord St. Lawrence. He now entered the room where his rival was, in no agreeable humour. Such are the petty miseries of vanity! Lady Donnington's especial favour had long ceased to afford his Lordship the least pleasure, yet the possible loss of it stung him to the quick.

Lord Lewis Rivers, not having seen Alicia before, was so struck by the splendour of her complexion, that he was some time of recovering his usual manner. Alicia turned disordered and displeased from his uncivil stare; while he, in his ordinary half-alive way, asked Lord St. Lawrence how he was, and what was

become of his friend Princess Azorinski. "O! by the way, Lady Donnington," he continued, "is there any truth in the report, that you and Madame are about to coalesce? What a formidable administration you might make of it! On one side, *all the talents* (bowing to Lady Donnington); on the other — how shall I get out of the sentence? — Do help me, St. Lawrence; you are the best acquainted with what sort of influence the fair Pole has at command."

"Fair!" was the general exclamation, with lifted hands.

"Certainly not beauty, I admit," was the reply to the last question.

Lord Lewis yawningly accused Lord St. Lawrence of having "ratted abominably from the Hotel Azorinski;" telling Lady Donnington, that if she patronised such proceedings, he would certainly cross over himself to the deserted benches. "I have no doubt but I shall find it immensely amusing," he continued, in the same tone of impertinent carelessness: "we have overheard such

delicious nonsense from her! Do you remember, Lady Donnington, that day we met her high mightiness at Knowle? 'O de pretty ittle savage flower!' when she saw the wood anemones. And 'O de mean woman — money for de mean woman!' when some poor animal was pestering at the gate. I hope, St. Lawrence, you did not take lessons in English from her Highness before you made your famous speech?"

"Not exactly from her language: her feeling, you perceive, is worth copying," was his Lordship's perfectly good-humoured, yet pointed reply.

Lady Donnington, with a gracious air of supplication, entreated Lord St. Lawrence's pardon for laughing at his greatest friend, excusing herself by saying she was laughing then at an absurd joke somebody had put about on the subject. They said Princess Azorinski studied mistakes every morning out of the dictionary of synonyms."

"My greatest friend! Nay, this is too perfidious in the fair cause of my delin-

quency, to call up the ghost of conscience! Miss Barry, will not you protect me?"

"Not from the ghost of a single act of fickleness!" returned Alicia, drawing back as he approached her.

"Walk forth and hang thyself, St. Lawrence after this," said Lord Lewis Rivers: — "but stay — not before thou hast presented me to Miss Barry. Won't you? Well then, Miss Barry, out of pure public-spiritedness, I beg leave to present Lewis Rivers (Idler), and that merely to depose that I cannot give his Lordship a character for constancy, except as touching certain political questions, for which no rational animal, except himself and the ministers, care one rush."

"O! but that says a great deal for the defendant," cried a pretty pleasant woman: "people are scarcely ever good by halves."

Lord St. Lawrence eagerly expressed a hope that Miss Barry was as much inclined to charitable constructions as Mrs.

Chetwynd. Alicia owned she was accustomed to take the evidence of plain matter-of-fact; and saw no reason why Lord St. Lawrence could not add one friend to his list, without striking off another.

Lady Donnington started half off her sofa at this courageous yet hurriedly-spoken question; but, afraid of committing herself, laid her head back again.

"Swamped! utterly swamped!" was called out by a slovenly young man, notorious for passing his life in yachts and cutters. "Floored!" cried Sir Edgar Trevor, who, just transplanted from Eton to a regiment of hussars, was already enrolled in Lady Donnington's corps of followers. "Off! off!" reiterated an elegant patron of theatres. "Poor Lord St. Lawrence!" ejaculated Mrs. Chetwynd.

"It would be vain for a man to go upon his defence before a packed jury," resumed Lord St. Lawrence, affecting perfect composure. "I shall reserve my statement of facts until I am fortunate

enough to find my two fair judges by themselves."

"No, no," clamoured the young hussar: "a speech, my Lord! make a speech! It will be capital fun, Lady Donnington. Order him out to make a speech. Let's parade all his parliamentary stuff. St. Lawrence is used to bully the opposition."

"I vote for the speech by all means," rejoined Lord Lewis Rivers, infinitely pleased with the mischief he had done; "and if it be but half so pathetic as his Lordship's notable appeal for the slaves or the slave-drivers, I really forget which, we must all prepare for woe! Handkerchiefs, your handkerchiefs, ladies!"

"A table-cloth for *my* tears!" chimed in the laughing Trevor, "or that huge jar. Out with the *pot-pourri*, Rivers. Now, my Lord, I am ready to weep floods."

Lady Donnington was in fits of laughter: every body laughed. Even Alicia could not forbear laughing at the

joyous earnestness with which the young hussar actually emptied the jar of its aromatic contents upon the delicate Persian carpet, in defiance of Lady Donnington's screaming threat of perpetual banishment. But the very action gave a new direction to mirth. Along with the dried mixture of bay-salt and orange-flowers came rolling out cards, notes, rolled-up exhibition catalogues, and more than one forgotten duster, by way of testimony to the house-maid's merit.

Sir Edgar Trevor hailed the hidden treasures of the jar as a prize equal in value to that memorable pair of pockets which were once dropped in full assembly at a certain great house in Piccadilly, and occasioned the immediate *going out* of that useful appendage to a woman's apparel. While he was recapitulating, upon his mother's authority, all the things found in this ludicrous prize, and others were reading the notes aloud, and Lady Donnington was scolding them for spoiling her carpet, Lord St. Lawrence hastily seized the attention of

Alicia. His object was to clear himself from the charge of caprice. In doing so, he spoke with such warmth of regard and respect for Princess Azorinski, and adverted so pointedly to her knowledge of, and allowance for, the cause of his changed habits, that even his inexperienced auditor could not be insensible to the strain of his excuses and the urgency of his manner. As he added, "I hope one day to gain your permission to defend myself fully," her eye, sinking under the soft fervour of his, fell upon his watch-riband. The instant suffusion of her cheeks showed that she had either noticed its colour, or that she understood Lord St. Lawrence's last words.

Confused, and conscious of being confused, she said something that implied she laid the blame upon Prince Azorinski's disagreeableness. Lord St. Lawrence hastened to do justice to his absent friend; and in fewer words than he had employed in vindicating the Princess and himself, convinced Alicia that all three

had been wantonly misrepresented to her.

"I assure you his high character honours her affection," said Sir Edgar Trevor slowly, repeating his Lordship's last expression as he overheard it, and mimicking his tone: "who are you defending now, my Lord? It will be too bad of you if you have been making speeches to Miss Barry, and chousing us out of them, while we were digging up curiosities from the ruins of Lady Donnington's china jar. Miss Barry, allow me the honour of presenting you with this remains of an ancient fan; and you, my Lord, with this MS. in the hammer-headed characters."

"Nail-headed, thou hopeless antiquary!" amended Lord Lewis Rivers. "I quote the review of some horrid travels."

"O! by the way," resumed young Trevor, "has any body read George Brandon's Travels? Do you think the fellow really met a hippopotamus at the top of Pompey's pillar?"

"You absurd creature!" exclaimed Lady Donnington, flattering his wilful *étourderie* by a smile.

Young Trevor rang the bell: a servant entered. "Be so good, sir, as tell the housemaid or housemaids that they deserve hanging, drawing, and quartering, for this pretty mess, of which I am innocent." The grave-looking servant bowed. "Do you sweep it all up forthwith; and if not expeditiously and efficaciously, so that Lady Donnington may not have the slightest ground to sue me for spoiling her carpet, I 'll scratch you out of my will."

The well-trained domestic bowed again with unaltered gravity, and retired.

"Did you ever see such a fellow?" exclaimed Sir Edgar.

"What integrity of respect!" yawned Lord Lewis Rivers.

"Oh, if my groom of the chambers were not made of lead, such a ridiculous creature as you, Sir Edgar, must render him impertinent."

To be thought ridiculous, in the way

Lady Donnington used the term, being the height of the young hussar's ambition, he was enchanted. Lord Lewis Rivers's taste being for eminence in the line of insolence, indolently observed, that he could not testify to Mr. Black or White's merit, her Ladyship having got quite a new set about her since he had last had the honour of kissing her feet." The expression was equivocal, and might apply either to her Ladyship's hired servants or to her willing slaves. Lady Donnington was satisfied: for pique proclaimed power, and that was *her* aim.

A re-entry of servants, and the speedy removal of litter from the floor, changed the current of conversation. Alicia ascertaining that no more tea was wanted, betook herself to learn the mystery of knotting chenille by the side of Mrs. Chetwynd, that she might escape from the gentlemen; and Lord Lewis Rivers, calling out, "Who will play at words?" directly drew a small table to the sofa, on which Lady Donnington partially reclined, and began writing down the set of dis-

jointed nouns substantive, &c. which are furnished for every person playing the game, and which each is to weave into a sentence, containing an anecdote or moral remark, or mere jest, as the writer's talent inclines.

In a moment half a dozen pens were going as fast as possible, amidst laughing and exclaiming at blunders and difficulties; one person insisting upon having a peep at the other's performance, to help their own lame wit; bolder ones actually snatching at the desired prize. Lady Donnington's voice was heard over all, instructing or expostulating. The first mover of the diversion proved his superior acquaintance with it, by almost immediately constructing a sentence into which the given words were perfectly woven; but which no one, except Lady Donnington, was permitted to see. At first reading it, she exclaimed against his "abominableness!" then laughed excessively, vowing "he must have something to do with the Age;" while he, protesting his present *jeux-d'esprit* was only an act of

memory since the morning, tore up the paper, and left its nature to be guessed at by the other aspirants. Lord St. Lawrence, who had hitherto remained turning over the leaves of a new publication, as if skimming them, yet in what Sir Edward Trevor maintained was "a bolt-upright, fast-asleep state" to their contents, now seemed roused by the gay hussar's repeated cries of "a call of the House, my Lord!" and, throwing aside the book, came forward to the populous quarter of the room.

In passing Alicia, from whose side Mrs. Chetwynd had just gone to shake hands with Lady Donnington, and go away, he laid down a folded paper, and said, in an under tone, "This must be your property, Miss Barry, from the name I caught a glimpse of." He passed on, without having been observed by any one.

Alicia, glancing at the paper, which was a letter taken out of its envelope, saw her mother's hand-writing; and concluding, from its great length, that it was

indeed one to herself, hastily put it into her work-basket; wondering when she could have dropped it, and what it contained. Her consternation and alarm subsided when she recollected "the MS. in the nail-headed characters," which Sir Edgar Trevor had presented to Lord St. Lawrence within the last half hour, which had therefore come from the housemaid's repository for rubbish, and could not be any of Mrs. Barry's later epistles.

Only in her last letters had Mrs. Barry mentioned Lord St. Lawrence; and although Alicia was certain that no well-bred man would purposely read a line not addressed to himself, without being assured of the writer's permission, she would have felt humiliated had it been possible for him to have caught a glimpse of his own name in her mother's writing.

Reassured by this conviction, therefore, and vividly grateful for his Lordship's attention to her feelings, she joined the group round the sofa, most of whom were now upon the move for departure. Lord St. Lawrence's approach had been

the signal for a cessation of laughing and whispering amongst some of them, and for a termination of young Trevor's scrambling efforts to regain and reunite the scattered fragments of Lord Lewis Rivers's remembered newspaper paragraph. He was a youth of pliant materials, whom a straw would bend to any good-natured direction, and, if he supposed it so, to any harmless one: shrewdly suspecting the nature of those Sibyl's fragments, the moment he saw Lord Lewis Rivers look uneasy he tore the scraps he had collected, and joined him in saying good night.

Lord St. Lawrence very soon followed their example; and the next quarter of an hour took away every visitor. After that, Alicia escaped to her own room, always averse to a *tête-à-tête* with Lady Donnington, whose conversation, when not decorated for company, was hard and unpleasant, flowing as it did from a worldly spirit unsoftened by constitutional tenderness, unchanged by a higher power.

Alicia sat down on her low French bed,

less pleased than ever with Lady Donnington, less satisfied than formerly with her own belief of Lord St. Lawrence's attentions being solely directed to the governing mistress of the mansion, and more distressed therefore about the conduct she should observe towards both.

There had been a time when if the same convictions had been pressed upon her by the remarks of others, and by Lord St. Lawrence's manner to herself, she would have believed it probable he only sought her from a habit of admiring new faces, or aimed but at a triumph of vanity. Now she could not, would not think so; his conduct towards her had been marked throughout with delicacy, and she durst not deny with an appearance of serious intention, which made her heart tremble. Had passing admiration animated him, or had cold vanity prompted, he would have singled her out at first for compliment and appropriation. This had not been the case; his notice of her had grown with their acquaintance; his particularity had followed

their sympathy upon points of feeling and conduct. All this looked dreadfully like honest, fair-meaning attachment. — Of any sentiment for Lord St. Lawrence, which would voluntarily have led her to seek his affection, or even to profit by it, Alicia found herself wholly void; but she now knew her parents' ardent wishes, nay hopes — and she had ever believed it to be the bounden duty of a child to strive at complying with the lawful desires of a parent. She was not so ignorant of what rank and riches bestow, nor so insensible of their value as to be unmindful of the sacrifices Lord St. Lawrence would make were he seriously to propose for her, and the advantages she would derive were she to accept his hand. She admitted, that he interested her, — that he pleased her, — that she had seen no one in England she liked half so well, — that all she had first heard to his discredit had been since unsaid or explained. Why then did she feel such heavy-heartedness, while summing up these evidences in favour of what her mother longed for?

"I have not known him long enough to be sure he is all that he appears: that must be the reason. If I could be as certain of his character as of Jocelyn's—" The suspended sentence was not ended.

Without a friend to hold the light to her heart, Alicia remained for some time musing over this idea, assured that a thorough conviction of Lord St. Lawrence's worth was alone wanting to diminish her repugnance to the mere complacency of trying to find him what he seemed.

Of Jocelyn Hastings's principles and conduct she had from childhood been completely informed; because she had not only seen him every day, under every variation of humour, but heard him freely spoken of by others, under the different impressions of their varying humours. The result was, an amount of testimonies to his excellence. With Lord St. Lawrence she was differently situated: she knew him solely in the dressed circle of female society, and that not home society; she knew none of his relatives,

from whose unguarded expressions an individual's temper and degree of worth may be fairly gathered: she had not a single confidential friend moving in the same circle with him, to note his actions when out of Lady Donnington's society; and those who had dropped hints to his prejudice were obviously either so envious of him or of herself, that she could not be weak enough to rely upon their testimony.

Thus, having no candid representation of Lord St. Lawrence to ground her own conclusions upon, and as yet but a superficial acquaintance with his heart, how could she contemplate without shrinking the yielding obedience to her mother's last injunction, — "accept him directly, Alicia, if he proposes: no hesitation, I beseech you?"

At this part of her long self-enquiry, she searched her work-basket for the letter Lord St. Lawrence had so considerately restored to its supposed owner. What was her surprise and bitter feelings to find it one from her mother, to

which, as she read on, she found she had not been made privy, and which at once destroyed her confident belief of being freely invited by Lady Donnington to pass the season in England.

The adulatory strain of this letter, the evident anxiety of its writer to get her daughter asked by Lady Donnington, the broad allusions to the unconscious victim's great sense of obligation, were she to be honoured by such distinguishing friendship, the description of Alicia's dancing, and of the *sensation* produced by that and her beauty at the member for ———'s ball, were so many repeated blows to a heart at once delicate and ingenuous. The poor girl was almost stupefied by the shock, holding the open paper in her hand, scarcely conscious whether she were truly awake.

Every one of her views was for the moment changed. Lady Donnington, wooed into making her an inmate of her house, was now painfully elevated into a person granting an important suit. She was justified in having shown surprise,

nay anger, at Alicia's avowed indifference to all the advantages which companionship with her and her high society conferred upon a private gentleman's daughter, ambitious of display. She was positively generous in never having once hinted at the circumstance which had induced her to undertake the guidance of her intractable youth; and she was further kind in avoiding all mention of Lord St. Lawrence's partiality, most likely lest she might by unseasonable railleries frighten or pique Alicia into disappointing her parents' wishes. But what had been Mrs. Barry's part in this transaction? A daughter hid her eyes when she would have looked on it. Tears, bitter, bitter tears, yet no word of complaint, were witness to her filial sorrow and disappointment. She thought of her boasted face, and believing it the principal source of this grief and mortification, sincerely wished she might have exchanged it for one that would have a charm only in the sight of real affection. "Ah! dearest Flora!" she exclaimed,

apostrophising her absent sister, "you little knew what you wished when you wished for such a face as mine! What have I got by it, except shame and vexation, and cruel exile from all I love dearest?" Alicia's full heart yearned for pouring out; but she was in the frightful solitude of the world, where to her every man and woman was only a mocking shape, devoid of substance and of soul. She had no intimates there, save Lord St. Lawrence, the very being she must not confide in. She would not throw herself into the arms of her sister's sympathy, because that would be unveiling the faults of their mother; and she could not speak to Lady Donnington on the subject, because Mrs. Barry's own language was not to be explained away by her daughter.

Alicia had no way of unburthening her feelings except to Mrs. Barry herself; and to her mother, therefore, she determined to write on the morrow.

Ere she began to undress, her maid came more than once to the door, to hear if she

were wanted ; and at length quite tired of submissive waiting, ventured to tap, and enquire if Miss Barry were ready to undress? Alicia admitted her for a few moments; then pleading extreme weariness, dismissed her again, and sighing over all the vanities of her situation, addressed her nightly prayer to the Father of mercies, with a deeper sense of her utter dependence upon Him for all of light and good which had shone or might yet shine upon her path of life.

The very next day two very different letters went from the marine villa to France. Lady Donnington kept to her bond: she communicated to Mrs. Barry in brief what had passed between her and her young charge; simply asking whether she chose Miss Barry to stay or go? Expressing perfect willingness to part with or retain her. All this, however, she neutralized, by adding, that although Mrs. Barry knew she had from the first begged never to be called upon to advise or persuade the young lady on the subject of marriage, it was right to let a mo-

ther know that every body talked of Lord St. Lawrence's particularity to her daughter, and that it was expected he would certainly propose to her. Of course his Lordship would wish to see if Miss Barry made as great a sensation in London as at Brighton. If Mrs. Barry liked to let her girl take the probable chance of such a brilliant establishment, she must be so good as say what sum she would allow for her expenses during the next three months; for so long Lady Donnington thought she should stay in town. After which, Miss Barry would be free to recross the Irish channel, either as Lady St. Lawrence in fact or in prospect. A list of Alicia's admirers was curiously given by way of balance to a longer list of forthcoming demands upon Colonel Barry's bank notes; and the letter concluded by a few hastily-recollected "hopes that Mr. Barry continued to send good accounts from India, and would very soon come home."

Alicia's letter contained as clear an account of her feelings, and of Lord St.

Lawrence's manner towards her, as she could make distinct to her own apprehension. She was conscious that she had indeed shut her eyes upon the increasing testimonies of his interest in her, rather than his admiration; and this, not from a lurking spirit of coquetry paltering with conscience, but from some occult averseness to be loved by him, and to love him in return; from genuine unwillingness to exchange the peace and privacy of a middle station for the stir and show of exalted rank; from a consequent dread of the pains and persecution which were likely to follow the serious tender of his hand; and from a dread of being led by unsuspected vanity into giving a meaning to his friendliness and courtesy, which might cause her to become ridiculous. She called upon her mother to remember how ill she was fitted for a station of great responsibility and representation; her natural timidity, self-distrust, and bashfulness, making even momentary situations of the kind painful to her; she besought her to think how often, not

only a young woman herself, but her friends, were laughed at for appearing to expect the offer of a hand that never might be offered; and she prayed therefore not to be left exposed to the probability of this concealed derision, and to the possible suspicion from Lord St. Lawrence himself, that she wished to draw him on.

Whilst Alicia wrote thus frankly and earnestly, her affectionate wish of doing all she could to gratify her parent urged her to say as candidly, that for no one who had either looked love, or whispered love, did she feel the slightest preference; that she began to think highly of Lord St. Lawrence; and that, consequently, there was no obstinate rebellion in her mind against him; so that if her mother would but grant what she now implored almost on her knees, and summon her to France until her father returned to reunite the family in Ireland, that step would not only set her at ease, but put Lord St. Lawrence's regard to a desirable test.

If he only admired her, he would soon forget her; and she would then have escaped both the danger of growing to like him too well, and the mortification of being considered a disappointed, presumptuous girl. If, on the contrary, any serious inclination existed in his heart, he would always have it in his power to renew their acquaintance under her father's roof; and, so doing, she would be more disposed to consider him gratefully and partially; nay, she promised sincerely to endeavour at doing so, were such conduct to claim it.

Nothing could be more dutiful or rational than this proposition, which Alicia made with every purpose of abiding by it, if acceded to: but it was destined to find nothing rational in the mind that was to decide upon its sense and delicacy! Her most painful task was to notice the letter which had been thrown out amongst the *pot-pourri* the preceding night. After many alternations of resolution, becoming more anxious to spare her mother's feelings as her own tranquillized, she

thought it best merely to state the circumstance, without commenting upon it, by way of apprising Mrs. Barry of Lady Donnington's carelessness about letters, and so warning her not to write what the whole world of fashion might not read. But for Sir Edgar Trevor's amusing folly, and Lord St. Lawrence's proper consideration, this humiliating production might have been read aloud, in common with other notes. Alicia, who now knew its contents, felt in a horror at the bare possibility of such a thing; and trusted that, without expressing her feelings, her mere statement of the incident would cause her mother some salutary reflections, and, perhaps, become a beacon to her for life.

The answer to this letter put an end to hope. Mrs. Barry wrote in a transport of fondness and prodigality; enclosing a fresh order upon a banker for pocket-money, coupled with the assurance, that by the same post Lady Donnington would know how much more was transmitted for Alicia's general expenses during the ensuing town season. Of course, Alicia's

entreaty for permission to join her mother was decidedly negatived.

It would be wearisome to recapitulate Mrs. Barry's unsound reasonings upon the subject. Suffice it that she rested her prime one upon the confession, that as she found the important invitation from Lady Donnington had been the consequence of her own letter, (which hitherto its writer had *somehow* supposed was never received) she really could not be so capricious as to withdraw her child from their illustrious friend when she desired to retain her. At all events, Mrs. Barry would not venture to remove her daughter without the Colonel's sanction; and as he would soon return, she must leave it for him to decide what was best to be done to make Lord St. Lawrence come forward with something decided.

At this sentence, Alicia involuntarily crushed the paper in her hand, with a hopeless, bitter sense of her mother's obtuseness to womanly delicacy. "To make Lord St. Lawrence come forward!" she repeated from the letter. "Oh,

mamma! mamma!" Shaking off some hot tears as she spoke, she turned to a long epistle from Flora, in expectation of soothing and comfort.

But even Flora had joined the combination against her. She wrote in a full glow of pride in, and ambition for, an idolized sister, under the strong excitement of an awakened imagination and an easily-kindled heart. She was at the visionary age between thirteen and fourteen, when in girls of premature sensibility a strange mixture of childish ignorance and of womanly sentiment is often perceptible.

Mrs. Barry had not unwisely hastened to secure the powerful aid of Flora, whose impetuous character frequently impelled her sister's softer one; and having determined, for certain cogent reasons, to devote her last weeks in France to frugal seclusion, had quitted Paris almost immediately after the receipt of the two letters from Brighton, and taken up a temporary abode under the same roof with her youngest child. There she had shown Flora her sister's

journals, together with Lady Donnington's half-quire of well-filled note paper; and the result was, that Flora became convinced of Lord St. Lawrence's devotion to her sister, and of her own instantaneous wish to have him for a brother-in-law.

She now seconded her mother's exhortations and worldly arguments by applying motives better adapted for the purpose of influencing one indifferent to selfish pleasures or honours, yet alive to nobler distinctions, and tenderly susceptible of pure affections. She first gave her own exalted ideas of romantic and generous attachment (collected from many an ardent picture presented to her young mind by ungoverned and multifarious reading since her residence abroad); then compared it with Lord St. Lawrence's described conduct; recalled the charming expression of his countenance, "*which could only belong to a noble heart*;" and finally entreated Alicia to consider well ere she doomed such a person to "never-ending sorrow."

She repelled with the force of a mind conscious to strength in all its purposes and decisions, her sister's notion that a life of gala and perpetual sacrifice of quiet was necessarily the lot of nobility; maintaining, that rank gave persons more power to choose their own way of living, while it greatly widened their sphere of benevolence; and that, consequently, it would be its possessor's fault were not full liberty in both enjoyed.

She next painted the sort of life which she supposed Lord St. Lawrence liked, and she knew her sister loved: wholly discarding every idea of the many traversing circumstances, opposing interests, adverse claims, and over-ruling opinions, which experience would have known were likely to thwart even the most settled will of a nobleman born to 50,000*l.* a year from pursuing the happier habits of a commoner with an eighth of that income. She drew a sort of poetical existence, which she believed certain of being realised, if two hearts were agreed

upon the plan; colouring it with all the eloquence of enthusiastic youth.

It is falsely said, that youth is the season of diffidence and consciousness of ignorance: naturally it is far otherwise. Whenever we find great capacities left to educate themselves, we shall see them too often arrogant or rash in judgment; blind to the value of experience; and prone to take their own imaginations for rational conclusions. Minds of the highest character yield to the correction of time and events, and are thus mellowed into ripeness: inferior ones refuse to receive opinions which they spurned while unconscious of their importance, and remain therefore as crude and harsh as in their earliest days.

Flora Barry's forward intellect was at this period in the first dangerous state of headlong energy and self-confidence. She had been living of late solely amongst frivolous girls and empty-headed teachers whom she despised, reading every book she could reach, and becoming more and more aware of her mother's deficiencies.

She could not, therefore, be expected to improve in self-knowledge, or doubt that she was not quite competent to give her sister counsel upon the most momentous concern of a woman's life. Alicia was so accustomed to companion her heart with Flora's, and so affectionately inclined to consider the latter's mind superior to her own, that she did not for the moment question the propriety of her attempting to advise. She even pondered over many parts of the long epistle; and if its reasonings did not convince, its persuasive earnestness warmed; so that she laid it aside at last with a pensive conviction that she ought to believe herself fortunate if Lord St. Lawrence really preferred her, and if he proved all that he now appeared.

To remain with Lady Donnington was her fate; and to her fate she must submit: reserving, however, the power of acting towards Lord St. Lawrence and her titled chaperon as circumstances and her own feelings demanded.

Many were the mortifying recollections

and anticipations she had to smother; but they were smothered; and when Lady Donnington carelessly announced that she had heard from Mrs. Barry, and was to retain her fair guest, Alicia endeavoured to utter some words of thanks for her past and intended kindness. She remembered that Lady Donnington had been covertly, therefore pitifully asked to receive her under her care; and such a recollection taught her to feel obligation.

Lady Donnington announced in the same breath her own intention of removing to London almost immediately. She knew that a great public question must carry Lord St. Lawrence to his post in the Upper House, and not choosing to *follow*, she determined to be followed. A few days, therefore, were only given Alicia to prepare for quitting Brighton.

Preparation, however, was unnecessary. She had no beloved friends to part from; and her splendid companion had a crowd of servants, to take even the trouble of thinking off her hands. Both ladies,

therefore, left Brighton as though they were going away from a mere spectacle; the one cheerfully indifferent to every thing and every body there; the other depressed by her very want of a regret. So natural to an affectionate heart is the desire of having a kindly interest in some fellow-creature!

Lord St. Lawrence was not of course included in the persons left behind; at the moment he heard that the marine villa would be made desolate, he named the evening of the same day for his night-travelling in the same direction.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.